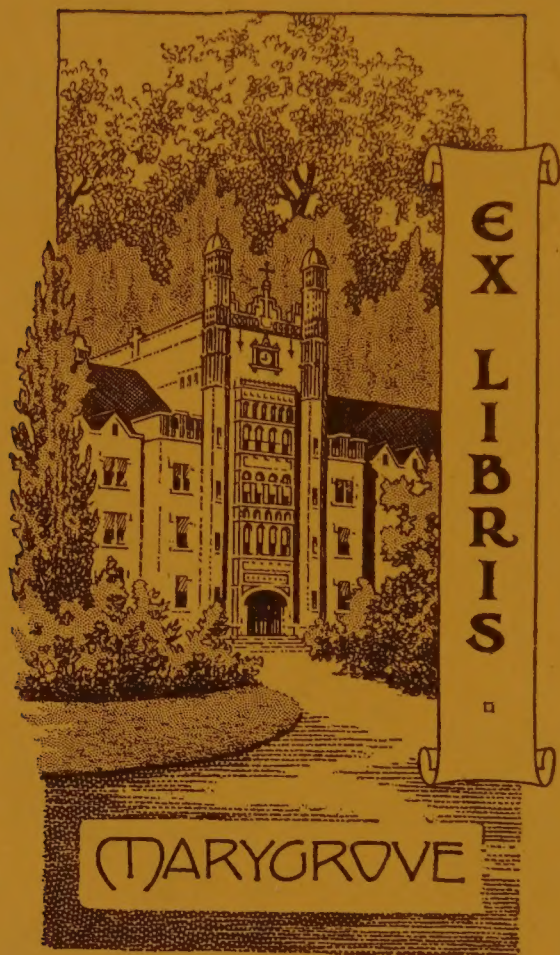


An Italian Anthology

*Translated into English by various
authors and collected by*

FLORENCE TRAIL



BRUCE HUMPHRIES, INC.

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TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH
BY VARIOUS AUTHORS
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FLORENCE TRAIL

AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF ITALIAN LITERATURE"
"THE SCHOLAR'S ITALY"



BOSTON
RICHARD G. BADGER, PUBLISHER
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The student should use this collection as a supplement to my 65 metrical translations in "A History of Italian Literature" and 23 in "The Scholar's Italy."

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LATIN HYMN

By St. Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan.—340-397 *

Come, Holy Ghost, who ever One
Art with the Father and the Son,
Come, Holy Ghost, our souls possess
With thy full flood of holiness.

In will and deed, by heart and tongue,
With all our powers, thy praise be sung;
And love light up our mortal frame,
Till others catch the living flame.

Almighty Father, hear our cry
Through Jesus Christ our Lord most high,
Who with the Holy Ghost and thee
Doth live and reign eternally.

Trans. by John Henry Newman.

LINES FROM THE LATIN

ON ONE WHO HAD NEVER LEFT VERONA

By Claudian.—A. D. 400 †

Blest man, who in his boyhood's home has passed
From youth to age, and finds that home his last!
Who, where he crawled a babe, with staff-propped
hand

Scores still his farm's long annals in the sand!
No dupe of vain Ambition's swelling dreams;
No wandering waif who drinks of far-off streams;

* See Page 32 of "The Scholar's Italy."

† See Page 28 of "The Scholar's Italy."

Scared by no shipwreck, no alarm of war;
Vexed with no wranglings of the clamorous Bar;
He, letting town and politics pass by,
Enjoys the large horizon of his sky.
The years by crops, not consuls, he computes,
And spring and autumn marks by flowers or fruits.
One field at morning, and at evening one,
His dials span the pathway of the sun.
He set the acorn germ of that tall tree,
And minds when yonder wood was young as he.
Verona seems like India to explore;
Benacus' lake is as the Red Sea Shore.
No less the grandsons of his sons admire
His vigorous limbs and unabated fire.
Rush round the world, to earth's last limits roam,
Life's longest travels still are made at home.

Trans. by W. J. Courthope.

THE ORDER OF NATURE

From the Latin of Boëthius.—525

Thou, who wouldst read, with an undarkened eye,
The laws by which the Thunderer bears sway,
Look at the stars that keep, in yonder sky,
Unbroken peace from Nature's earliest day.

The great sun, as he guides his fiery car,
Strikes out the cold moon in his rapid sweep;
The Bear, that sees star setting after star
In the blue brine, descends not to the deep.

The star of eve still leads the hour of dews;
Duly the day-star ushers in the light;
With kindly alternations Love renews
The eternal courses bringing day and night.

Love drives away accursèd War, and keeps
The realm and host of stars beyond his reach.
In one long calm the general Concord steeps
The elements, and tempers each to each.

The moist gives place benignly to the dry;
Heat ratifies a faithful league with Cold;
The nimble flame springs upward to the sky;
Down sinks by its own weight the sluggish mould.

Still sweet with blossoms is the year's fresh prime;
Her harvests still the ripening Summer yields;
Fruit-laden Autumn follows in his time,
And rainy Winter waters still the fields.

The elemental harmony brings forth
And rears all life, and when life's term is o'er
It sweeps the breathing myriads from the earth,
And whelms and hides them to be seen no more.

While the great Founder, he who gave these laws,
Holds the firm reins and sits amid the skies,
Monarch and Master, Origin and Cause,
And Arbiter supremely just and wise.

He guides the force he gaye; his hand restrains
And curbs it to the circle it must trace;
Else the fair fabric which his hand sustains
Would fall to fragments in the void of space.

Love binds the parts together; gladly still
They court his kind command and wise decree.
Unless Love held them subject to the Will
That gave them being, they would cease to be.
Trans. by William Cullen Bryant.

LATIN HYMN

By Venantio Fortunato.—609

The royal banners forward go,
The cross shines forth in mystic glow;
Where He in flesh, our flesh Who made,
Our sentence bore, our ransom paid.

There whilst He hung, His sacred side
By soldier's spear was opened wide,
To cleanse us in the precious flood
Of water mingled with His blood.

Fulfilled is now what David told
In true prophetic song of old,
How God the heathen's King should be;
For God is reigning from the tree.

O tree of glory, tree most fair,
Ordained those holy limbs to bear,
How bright in purple robe it stood,
The purple of a Saviour's blood!

Upon its arms, like balance true,
He weighed the price for sinners due,
The price which none but He could pay,
And spoiled the spoiler of his prey.

To Thee, eternal Three in One,
Let homage meet by all be done:
As by the cross Thou dost restore,
So rule and guide us evermore.

Trans. by John Mason Neale.

LINES FROM THE LATIN OF A PANEGYRIC
ON THE EMPEROR BERENGARIUS

By an Unknown Venetian—A. D. 940

—“Why with unskilfullness in war
Do you offer your breasts to harsh arms,
O Italians? (Hubert said.) Yours rather are the
 feasts sacred to the heart;
Frequently to refresh your stomachs with delicate
 meats
And to prop your lofty dwellings with resplend-
 ent metal.
Not does the same or similar care vex the Gauls;
Whose desire is to conquer neighboring lands,
And to support their homes with the spoils gath-
 ered on every side.”

Trans. by Florence Trail.

LINES FROM THE LATIN OF AN HISTORIC
POEM

By Gulielmus Appulus

I

ROBERT GUISCARD IN BATTLE—1040

He fought with each hand, nor was the lance splintered,
Or the sword broken, in whichever hand he wished to wield it.
Thrice thrown from his horse, having thrice by his own strength resumed it
Greater in arms he returned;
Rage itself ministered the stimulus.
None in this war or after this was proved
Victor or vanquished, he put forth such great blows.

II

CHARACTER OF THE NORMANS.—1046

All came together, and twelve of the more noble
Whom birth and gravity of manners and age adorned
They elected leaders. Having been promoted to the Assembly
With these others appeared; fellow of the Assembly
Was the name of honor which they were given.
These all the lands
Divided among themselves, nor was inimical fate repugnant;

They apportioned separate quarters and those which
should belong
By lot to each leader, and also the tribute of the
places.

III

DESCRIPTION OF SALERNO.—1080

There is not a city of Latium more delightful than
this!
With fruits, with trees, with wine it abounds;
Neither apples, nuts nor beautiful palaces are want-
ing,
Not a lovely feature to the women nor probity to
the men.

Trans. By Florence Trail.

TWO MEDIAEVAL STUDENT SONGS

From the Carmina Burana in Latin of 1190

I

THE LOVER'S MONOLOGUE

Love rules everything that is;
Love doth change hearts in a kiss:
Love seeks devious ways of bliss:
 Love than honey sweeter.
 Love than gall more bitter.
Blind Love hath no modesties.
Love is lukewarm, hot and cold;
 Love is timid, over-bold;
 Loyal, treacherous, manifold.

Present time is fit for play:
Let Love find his mate to-day:
Hark, the birds, how sweet their lay!
Love rules young men wholly;
Love lures maidens solely:
Woe to old folk, sad are they!
Sweetest woman ever seen,
Fairest, dearest, is my queen:
And, alas, my chiefest teen!

Let an old man, chill and drear,
Never come thy bosom near;
Oft he sleeps with sorry cheer,
Too cold to delight thee:
Naught could less invite thee.
Youth with youth must mate, my dear.
Blest the union I desire:
Naught I know and naught require
Better than to be thy squire.

Love flies all the world around:
Love in wanton wiles is wound:
Therefore youth and maid are bound
In Love's fetters duly.
She is joyless truly
Who no lover yet hath found!
All the night in grief and smart
She must languish, wear her heart:
Bitter is that woman's part.

Love is simple, Love is sly;
Love is pale, of ruddy dye:
Love is all things, low and high:
Love is serviceable,
Constant and unstable:

Love obeys art's empery.
In this closed room Love takes flight;
 In the silence of the night;
Love made captive, conquered quite.

II

TO FLOWER O' THE THORN

The blithe young year is upward steering;
Wild winter dwindles, disappearing:
The short, short days are growing longer;
Rough weather yields, and warmth is stronger.
 Since January dawned, my mind
 Waves hither, thither, love-inclined
 For one whose will can loose or bind.

Prudent, and very fair the maiden;
Than rose or lily more love-laden;
Stately of stature, lithe and slender;
There's naught so exquisite and tender:
 The Queen of France is not so dear;
 Death to my life comes very near,
 If Flower o' the thorn be not my cheer.

The Queen of Love my heart is killing
With her gold arrow pain-distilling;
The god of Love, with torches burning,
Lights pyre on pyre of ardent yearning;
 She is the girl for whom I'd die;
 I want none dearer far or nigh;
 Though grief on grief upon me lie.

I with her love am thrall'd and taken,
Whose flower doth flower, bud, bloom, and
waken;
Sweet were the labor, light the burden,
Could mouth kiss mouth for wage and guerdon!
No touch of lips my wound can still,
Unless two hearts grow one, one will,
One longing! Flower of flowers, farewell!
Trans. by John Addington Symonds.

A MODERNIZED VERSION OF
THE HYMN OF THE SUN

By St. Francis of Assisi.—1182-1226

Blessèd be God, the Father
Of everything that lives,
Most blessèd for our lord the Sun
Who warmth and daylight gives.
The sun is bright and radiant,
He sheds his beams abroad,
But all his glory witnesseth
To what thou art, my God.

Then, for our sister Moon, O Lord,
Our hearts bless thee again;
And for the brilliant, beauteous stars
That glitter in her train.
We thank thee also for the Winds,
Our brothers, too, are they;
For air, and clouds, and pleasant days,
When all the earth seems gay.

But no less would we praise thy name
For any kind of weather,

Knowing that rain, and frost, and snow
All work for good together.
Thanks for our sister Water, too,
Pure water, cool and chaste,
Precious to everything that lives,
With powers of cleansing graced.

And for thine other mighty gift
Our brother Fire, whose flame
By thy command is sent to light,
With beams unquenchable and bright,
The solemn darkness of the night,
We bless thy holy name.

And lastly for our Mother Earth,
That goodness we adore,
She feeds us; she brings precious fruits
Out of her bounteous store;
And lovely flowers through the grass
She scatters full and free.
For all these things we bless thee, Lord,
For all proceed from thee.

Trans. by Madame Vincent.

LINES FROM "AMOR DI CARITATE"

Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi.—1186-1226

I

As red-hot iron seems to be
All fire and sun-lit air all flame,
For each of these is seen
Changed to another form,
So does Thy love transform
The heart Thou dost make clean.

II

Thee, Jesus, if I overflow
With love so sweet and so intense,
Who shall reprove me if I go
Out of myself—bereft of sense?
Since that same Love constrained Thee so
As to subdue Omnipotence.

O Love! how can I be
Afraid of foolishness?
If through it I possess
And am possessed by Thee!

Trans. by Richard Heath.

ANOTHER VERSION OF
IL CANTICO DEL SOLE

By St. Francis of Assisi.—1182-1226

Highest, omnipotent, good Lord,
Glory and honor to Thy name adored,
And praise and every blessing.
Of everything Thou art the source,
No man is worthy to pronounce Thy name.

Praised by his creatures all,
Praised be the Lord my God,
By Messer Sun, my brother above all,
Who by his rays lights us and lights the day—
Radiant is she with his great splendor stored,
Thy glory, Lord, confessing.

By Sister Moon and stars my Lord is praised,
Where clear and fair they in the heavens are raised.

By Brother Wind, my Lord, thy praise is said,
By air and clouds and the blue sky o'erhead,
By which Thy creatures are all kept and fed.

By one most humble, useful, precious, chaste,
By Sister Water, O my Lord, Thou'rt praised.

And praised is my Lord

By Brother Fire—he who lights up the night,
Jocund, robust is he, and strong and bright.

Praised art Thou, my Lord, by Mother Earth—
Thou who sustaineth her, and governest
And to her flowers, fruits, herbs, dost colour give
and birth. And praised is my Lord
By those who, for Thy love, can pardon give,
And bear the weakness and the wrongs of men,
Blessèd are those who suffer thus in peace,
By Thee, the Highest, to be crowned in Heaven.

Praised by our Sister Death, my Lord, art Thou
From whom no living man escapes.
Who die in mortal sin have mortal woe;
But blessed they who die doing Thy will,—
The second death can strike at them no blow.

Praises, and thanks, and blessing to my Master be:
Serve ye Him all, with great humility.

Trans. by Mrs. Oliphant.

DULCE EST DESIPERE

Student's Song from

The Carmina Burana—12th Century

Cast aside dull books and thought!
Sweet is folly, sweet is play:
Take the pleasure spring hath brought
In youth's opening holiday!
Right it is that age should ponder
On grave matter fraught with care;
Tender youth is free to wander,
Free to frolic, light as air.

Like a dream our prime is flown,
Prisoned in a study;
Sport and folly are youth's own;
Tender youth and ruddy.

Lo, the spring of life slips by,
Frozen winter comes apace;
Strength is minished silently,
Care writes wrinkles on our face;
Blood dries up and courage fails us,
Pleasure dwindles, joys decrease,
Till old age at last assails us
With his troop of illnesses.

Like a dream our prime is flown,
Prisoned in a study;
Sport and folly are youth's own,
Tender youth and ruddy.

Live we like the gods above!
This is wisdom, this is truth;

Chase the joys of gentle love
In the leisure of our youth!
Keep the vows we swore together,
Lads, obey that ordinance;
Seek the fields in sunny weather,
Where the laughing maidens dance.

Like a dream our prime is flown,
Prisoned in a study:
Sport and folly are youth's own,
Tender youth and ruddy.

There the lad who lists may see
Which among the girls is kind;
There young limbs deliciously
Flashing through the dances wind:
While the girls their arms are raising,
Moving, winding o'er the lea,
Still I stand and gaze, and gazing
They have stolen the soul of me!

Like a dream our prime is flown,
Prisoned in a study:
Sport and folly are youth's own,
Tender youth and ruddy.

Trans. by J. A. Symonds.

THE VIRGIN MARY TO HER DIVINE CHILD

By a Folk Poet of the Middle Ages

Sleep, oh sleep, dear Baby mine,
King Divine;
Sleep, my child; in sleep recline;
Lullaby, mine Infant fair,

Heaven's King
All glittering,
Full of grace as lilies rare.
Why dost weep, my Babe? Alas!
Cold winds that pass
Vex, or is't the little ass?
Lullaby, O Paradise;
Of my heart
Thou Saviour art.
On thy face I press a kiss.
Wouldst thou learn so speedily
Pain to try,
To heave a sigh?
Sleep, for thou shalt see the day
Of dire scath,
Of dreadful death,
To bitter scorn a shame, a prey.
Beauty mine, sleep peacefully;
Heaven's Monarch see!
With my veil I cover Thee.
Lullaby, my Spouse, my Lord,
Fairest Child,
Pure, undefiled,
Thou by all my soul adored.
Lo! the shepherd band draws nigh;
Horns they ply
Thee their King to glorify.
Lullaby, my soul's Delight;
For Israel.
Faithless and fell
Thee with cruel death would smite.

Sleep, sleep, Thou who dost heaven impart;

My Lord Thou art:

Sleep as I press Thee to my heart.

Poor the place where Thou dost lie,

Earth's loveliest!

Yet take Thy rest;

Sleep, my Child, and lullaby.

Trans. by Evelyn Carrington.

THE INSPIRATION OF DEATH IN FOLK-LORE

Tuscan

I

O friendly soil,

Soil that doth hold my love in thine embrace,

Soon as for me shall end life's war and toil

Beneath thy sod I too would have a place;

Where my love is, there do I long to be,

Where now my heart is buried far from me.—

Yes, where my love is gone I long to go,

Robbed of my heart I bear too deep a woe.

II

I hear death's step, I see him at my side,

I feel his bony fingers clasp me round;

I see the church's door is open wide,

And for the dead I hear the knell resound.

I see the cross and the black pall outspread;

Love, thou dost lead me whither lie the dead!

I see the cross, the winding-sheet I see;

Love, to the graveyard thou are leading me!

Neapolitan

Her lattice ever lit no light displays.
My Nella! can it be that you are ill?
Her sister from the window looks and says:
"Your Nella in the grave lies cold and still.
Oft times she wept to waste her life unwed,
And now, poor child, she sleeps beside the dead."

I to the church and lift the winding-sheet,
Gaze on my Nella's face—how changed, alas!
See 'twixt those lips whence issued flowers so sweet
Now loathsome worms (ah! piteous sight!) do pass.
Priest, let it be your care, and promise me,
That evermore her lamp shall lighted be.

Trans. Litell's Living Age, 1884.

A MORALIZED BEAST POEM

By an Umbrian Poet of the 13th Century

"An animal christen'd the panther is known,
That in breathing gives out such an odor,
No beast in the forest remaineth not prone
To run where a kind fate has stowed her;
Excepting the dragon, unwilling to own
His defeat as a wretched foreboder.
For in this way true life seed is sown.

Let man his soul's safety attend to with care,
For Christ breatheth forth the sweet savor.
And those who run to Him most holy saints are,
Whom He feeds and lifts up to His favor.
The dragon a foe and a traitor must fare
As one doom'd before Judgment to quaver.
For he cannot the sweet savor share."

Trans. by Florence Trail.

THE DIES IRAE

Of Tomaso da Celano.—13th Century

Day of wrath! oh, day of mourning!
See fulfilled the prophets' warning,
Heaven and earth in ashes burning!

Oh, what fear man's bosom rendeth,
When from heaven the Judge descendeth,
On whose sentence all dependeth.

Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth;
Through earth's sepulchres it ringeth;
All before the throne it bringeth.

Death is struck, and nature quaking,
All creation is awaking,
To its Judge an answer making.

Lo! the Book exactly worded,
Wherein all hath been recorded:
Whence shall judgment be awarded.

When the Judge His seat attaineth,
And each hidden deed arraigneth,
Nothing unavenged remaineth.

What shall I, frail man, be pleading?
Who for me, be interceding,
When the just are mercy needing?

King of majesty tremendous,
Who dost free salvation send us,
Fount of pity, then befriend us!

Think, good Jesus, my salvation
Cost thy wondrous Incarnation;
Leave me not to reprobation!

Faint and weary Thou hast sought me,
On the cross of suffering bought me.
Shall such grace be vainly brought me?

Righteous Judge! for sin's pollution
Grant Thy gift of absolution,
Ere that day of retribution.

'Guilty, now I pour my moaning,
All my shame with anguish owning;
Spare, O God, Thy suppliant groaning!

Thou the sinful woman savèd'st;
Thou the dying thief forgavest;
And to me a hope vouchsafest.

Worthless are my prayers and sighing,
Yet, good Lord, in grace complying,
Rescue me from fires undying!

With Thy favored sheep oh, place me!
Nor among the goats abase me;
But to Thy right hand upraise me.

While the wicked are confounded,
Doomed to flames of woes unbounded ,
Call me, with Thy saints surrounded.

Low I kneel, with heart-submission,
See, like ashes, my contrition,
Help me in my last condition.

Ah! that day of tears and mourning!
From the dust of earth returning
Man for judgment must prepare him;
Spare, O God, in mercy spare him!

Lord, all pitying, Jesus blest,
Grant us Thine eternal rest.

Cent. tr. by Wm. J. Irons.

SPECIMENS OF THE NINNA-NANNA

(Slumber Songs) of the Peasants

I

Sleep on my breast as in a bower,
Sleep here my little Nazarene flower;
My heart when evening brings its dew
The ninna-nanana makes for you.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

II

Sleep, my baby, sleep, my darling,
While I hush thee with my song;
Sleep until the new sun rises,
Sleep in peace the whole night long.

III

Oh, Ninna and Anninia!
Sleep, baby boy.
Oh! Ninna and Anninia!
God give thee joy.
Oh! Ninna and Anninia!

Sweet joy be thine;
Oh! Ninna and Anninia!
Sleep, brother mine.

Trans. by Laura Alex. Smith.

THE FALCON

By Nina Siciliana.—13th Century

It grieves me that I did a falcon love;
I loved it so that for it I could die;
To train it to the decoy how I strove,
All its desire for food I'd satisfy.
Now it has flown away and far may rove,
For never has it mounted quite so high.
Within an orchard I can see it move,
Another dame to care for it will try.
My falcon, fondly did I nourish thee,
With bell of gold I did thy fair neck grace
That in bird catching thou'dst be bold and free,
Now thou hast broke thy leash and fled apace,
And hast ascended as the raging sea,
When thou wast firm in thy own fowling place.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

A SONG MADE FROM A SONNET

By Jacopo da Lentino.—1260

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourishèd?
Reply, reply.

It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies

In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell.
I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell.
Trans. by Shakespeare.

HYMN

By St. Thomas Aquinas.—1227-1274

O Saving Victim, opening wide
The gate of heaven to man below,
Our foes press on from every side,
Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.

All praise and thanks to Thee ascend
For evermore, blest One in Three;
Oh, grant us life that shall not end,
In our true native land with Thee.
Trans. by Edward Caswall.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN OF THE PIFFERARI

Dictated to the Abbé Gaume

O Virgin sweet, Saint Anna's child,
That bore the infant Jesus mild:
The Angels said, "Ye saints, arise,
See where the new-born Saviour lies;
A stable is his lowly seat,
Where asses and where oxen eat."
O blessed Virgin, undefiled,
Be thou our intercessor mild!
This Christmas night—this holy tide—
O may our songs to Heaven glide,
And Jesus hear them, by thy side.
Trans. by George Stillman Hillard.

A BALLAD MADE FROM A SONNET

By Rustico di Filippo.—13th Century

It was a lordling's daughter, the fairest one of three,
That likèd of her master as well as well might be,
Till looking on an Englishman, the fair'st that eye
could see,
Her fancy fell a-turning.

Long was the combat doubtful that love with love
did fight,
To leave the master loveless or kill the gallant
knight:
To put in practice either, alas, it was a spite
Unto the silly damsel!

But one must be refused; more mickle is the pain
That nothing could be used to turn them both to
gain,
For of the two the trusty knight was wounded with
disdain:
Alas, she could not help it!

Thus art with arms contending was victor of the day,
Which by a gift of learning did bear the maid away:
Then, lullaby, the learnèd man hath got the lady
gay;
For now my song is ended.

*Trans. and altered by Shakespeare in
"The Passionate Pilgrim."*

A JOCOSE SONNET

By Rustico di Filippo.—13th Century

I trow when God made Mister Messerin,
It was believed a marvel had been made,
That bird and beast and man here vied to win,
Since something of each nature was displayed.
In length of neck he was of ducks the kin,
The spine of a giraffe no more dismayed,
Yet if you dub him man you do not sin,
'Tis shown in his complexion's ruddy shade.
Still in his singing he is like a crow,
In knowledge you would say he is a beast.
But like a man in clothes he'd find excuse.
When he was made there was not much to do.
But power you must acknowledge here at least,
In willing such a strange thing to produce.
Trans. by Florence Trail.

SONNETS

By Compiuta Donzella.—13th Century

I

When leaves and flow'rs announce the verdant
Spring
The joy of all true lovers grows apace:
To gardens fair they wend their way, where sing
The little birds while they, more fond, embrace:
Those who are free and gay away care fling
And each comes forth to serve with beaming face,
To every maiden joy and peace they bring.
Bewilderment and tears form my sad case.

For lo! my father in the wrong holds me,
And makes my portion naught but grief and fear:
To give a lord to me his wish I see,
And I of this have no desire or care,
And from this torment would I gladly flee:
Hence neither leaf nor flow'r change my despair.

II

I'd like to leave the world, to serve my God
And separate my life from vanity,
Since flourish do I see around my road
Fraud, foolishness and vile inanity;
And courtesy and sense to death are trod
And the fine prize, the good soul's sanity;
In no need of a husband have I stood,
Nor will endure this world's profanity.
Rememb'ring that each man's with sin adorned,
For every man I feel a strong disdain,
And so to God my person I have turned.
My father makes me live in fear and pain,
Since he my willing vows to Christ has scorned;
I know not for what spouse he'll me detain.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

SONNET

By Guido Cavalcanti.—1250-1301

Lo! who is this which cometh in men's eyes
And maketh tremulously bright the air,
And with her bringeth love so that none there
Might speak aloud, albeit each one sighs?
Dear God, what seemeth if she turn her eyes
Let Love's self say, for I in no wise dare:
Lady of Meekness such, that by compare

All others as of Wrath I recognize.
Words might not body forth her excellence,
For unto her inclineth all sweet merit,
Beauty in her hath its divinity.
Nor was our understanding of degree,
Nor had abode in us so blest a spirit,
As might thereof have meet intelligence.

Trans. by Jefferson B. Fletcher.

SONNET TO DANTE

By Guido Cavalcanti.—1250-1301

Returning from its daily quest, my spirit
Changed thoughts and vile in thee doth weep to find:
It grieves me that thy mild and gentle mind
Those ample virtues which it did inherit
Has lost. Once thou didst loathe the multitude
Of blind and madding men—I then loved thee—
I loved thy lofty songs and that sweet mood
When thou wert faithful to thyself and me.
I dare not now thro' thy degraded state
Own the delight thy strains inspire—in vain
I seek what once thou wert—we cannot meet
As we were wont. Again and yet again
Ponder my words: so the false spirit shall fly
And leave to thee thy true integrity.

Trans. by Shelley.

HYMN KNOWN AS "STABAT MATER"

Attributed to Jacopo da Todi.—1306

At the cross her station keeping,
 Stood the mournful mother weeping,
Where he hung, the dying Lord;
For her soul of joy bereavèd,
Bowed with anguish, deeply grievèd,
 Felt the sharp and piercing sword.

O how sad and sore distressèd
Now was she, that mother blessèd
 Of the sole-begotten One.
Deep the woe of her affliction,
When she saw the crucifixion,
 Of her ever-glorious Son.

Who, on Christ's dear mother gazing,
Pierced by anguish so amazing,
 Born of woman, would not weep?
Who, on Christ's dear mother thinking,
Such a cup of sorrow drinking,
 Would not share her sorrows deep?

For his people's sins chastisèd,
She beheld her Son despisèd,
 Scourged, and crowned with thorns
 entwined;
Saw him then from judgment taken,
And in death by all forsaken,
 Till his spirit he resigned.

Jesus, may her deep devotion
Stir in me the same emotion,

Fount of love, Redeemer kind;
That my heart fresh ardour gaining,
And a purer love attaining,
May with thee acceptance find.

Trans. by Richard Mant and Edward Caswall.

THE PRAISE OF POVERTY

By Jacopone Da Todi.—1230-1306

Great should be our love for thee,
Sweetest love of poverty!

Little is enough for thee,
Sister of humility,
Just a little drink and food,
Just a dish, however rude.

Poverty hath scanty store,
Bread and water—nothing more
But some herbs—unless, indeed,
These a little salt should need.

Very safely doth she fare,
Having neither thought nor care;
Dread of thieves she cannot feel
Who has nothing they can steal.

Humbly at the door she knocks,
Carries neither bag nor box;
Other burden has she none,
Save the bit she lives upon.

Poverty has not a bed,
Nor a roof above her head,

Cloth nor table for her meat,
On the ground she sits to eat.

Ne'er a will to make has she,
So in peace dies poverty;
Kin nor friends can raise a suit,
There is nothing to dispute.

Poverty is full of mirth,
Scorning everything on earth;
None will court or speak her fair
In the hope to be her heir.

Very poor indeed art thou,
Yet thy home is heaven, I trow;
Sweetest lady, there can be
Nothing earthly dear to thee.

Those who crave for worldly gear,
They are dull and sad of cheer,
Always cumbered and distrest,
Never knowing ease nor rest.

Poverty is always gay,
Teaching man the perfect way,
Earthly things she holds in thrall,
Just because she spurns them all.

Hoarding up and laying by
Never troubleth poverty,
Free from carking care or sorrow
For the evening or the morrow.

Light of foot is she, I ween,
Glad of heart, and meek of mien,

Not a burden will she bear,
She—a stranger everywhere.

Poverty is frank and free,
Fareth well where'er she be,
For she knoweth that a room
Waits her in her heavenly home.

Poverty, thou hast a throne,
And the world is all thine own,
For the things thou dost disdain,
Must obey thy sovereign reign.

Poverty, supremely wise,
Wealth and treasures doth despise,
And the more she bends her will
Higher soars in freedom still.

To the very truly poor
God's high kingdom is secure:
This we know—for Christ has spoken,
And His word is never broken.

Poverty, most perfect state,
Thou alone are really great,
For the eternal life divine
Is, in truth, already thine.

Poverty, most full of grace,
Free from care, and bright of face,
How can any blush to be
Faithful lovers unto thee?

More and more their thirst doth grow
As thy sweetness more they know,

For thy waters cannot dry,
Fairest fount of poverty!

Through the streets aloud she cries,
Earthly treasure to despise,
Bids us turn from worldly pride,
Casting riches quite aside.

All these glories of the earth,
What—I ask you—are they worth?
Where is now the wealth and gear
Of the men who once were here?

Poverty, if thou wouldst gain
Quit this world so poor and vain;
More than this, too, must thou do—
Scorn thyself supremely too.

This is poverty—to be
Stripped and beggared utterly,
Self to conquer and disdain,
Then, at last, with Christ to reign.

Trans. in "Living Age" for Aug. 1875.

SONNET

By Cecco Angiolieri.—1250-1319

An I were fire, I would burn up the world;
An I were wind, with tempest I'd it break;
An I were sea, I'd drown it in a lake;
An I were God, to hell I'd have it hurled;
An I were pope, I'd see disaster whirled
O'er Christendom, deep joy thereof to take;
An I were emperor, I'd quickly make
All heads of all folk from their necks be twirled;

An I were death, I'd to my father go;
An I were life, forthwith from him I'd fly;
And with my mother I'd deal even so;
An I were Cecco, as I am but I,
Young girls and pretty for myself I'd hold,
And let my neighbors take the plain and old.

Trans. by J. A. Symonds.

SONNET

By Cino da Pistoia.—1270-1336

In the keeping of my lady love confides
As in the sun the ray, in heav'n the star.
The movings of her eyes the heart explore,
And for the blinded spirit naught provides
To veil the light that in her eyes abides.
With so great splendor no one's eyes can war.
The heart can view its peace but from afar.
Has proved it he who o'er these lines presides.
Smiling, it seems she happiness sends forth,
In passing by the way she brings delight.
Noble in actions, humble in her mien,
With gaiety she gladdens this old earth,
Is wise in speaking, in assuagement bright,
And giveth joy to all by whom she's seen.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

SONNET FROM "THE NEW LIFE"

By Dante.—1265-1321

"I felt a spirit of love begin to stir
Within my heart, long time unfelt till then;
And saw Love coming towards me fair and fain
(That I scarce knew him for his joyful cheer),
Saying, "Be now indeed my worshipper"!
And in his speech he laughed and laugh'd again.
Then, while it was his pleasure to remain,
I chanced to look the way he had drawn near,
And saw the Ladies Joan and Beatrice
Approach me, this the other following,
One and a second marvel instantly.

And even as now my memory speaketh this,
Love spake it then: "The first is christened Spring;
The second Love, she is so like to me."

Trans. by Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

THE 13th SONNET IN "VITA NUOVA"

By Dante

So gentle, honester than others are
My lady seems, if any she salute,
That every tongue grows tremulously mute,
Nor any eye to look on her may dare,
Though of her praises she is well aware.
Kindly she goes, humility her suit,
And seems as tho' she were an heavenly fruit
Dropt upon earth, miraculously rare;

And as we look entranced, from out her eye
'There goes a pleasing sweetness thro' the heart
Which none who see her ever fail to prove;
A phantom sweet, instinct with only love,
She seems, if ever her sweet lips she part,
Who to the spirit says in passing, "Sigh"!

Trans. by Keegan Paul.

THE LAST SONNET IN THE "VITA NUOVA"

By Dante

Beyond the sphere that hath the widest gyre
Passeth the sigh that leaves my heart below;
A new intelligence doth love bestow
On it with tears that ever draws it higher;
When it wins thither where is its desire
A lady it beholds who honor so
And light receives, that, through her splendid
 glow
The pilgrim spirit sees her as in fire;
It sees her such, that, telling me again
I understand it not, it speaks so low
Unto the mourning heart that bids it tell;
Its speech is of that noble one I know,
For "Beatrice" I often hear full plain,
So that, dear ladies, I conceive it well.

Trans. by James Russell Lowell.

STANZAS FROM THE THIRD CANZONE OF
"THE BANQUET"

Of Dante Alighieri

V

I say that all the virtues take their rise
From one sole root;
That primal Virtue, which makes mankind blest
In acting it.
Which is, as in the *Ethics* we may read,
The elective habit
Which ever holds the middle way in life,
And so adjusts its speech.
I say, then, that nobility perforce
Implies the good existing in its subject,
As baseness ever shows the evil there.
And moral virtue
Gives ever the same witness of the good;
Because in all they say
The two agree, having but one effect.
Whence it behooves from the one comes the other.
Or both come from a third;
But if the one were worth all of the other
Or even more, rather were it the source;
And all I have said here is presupposed.

VI

Nobility exists where virtue dwells,
Not Virtue where she is;
As that is heaven where we see the stars,
But not the converse.

And we in women and the age of youth
See this most saving power
Part of their fear of shame,
Which is not quite a virtue.
Therefore from her, as cometh perse from black,
All virtues take their rise;
Or rather their first parent, as I said.
But let none make his boast,
Saying, "By race I too belong to her",
For they are almost gods
Who have this grace, apart from all the vile,
For God alone doth give it to that soul
He sees in all its being
Perfectly fitted for it; so but few
Can call that seed of happiness their own
That God doth plant in the well-fitted soul.

VII

The soul that this high virtue doth adorn
Doth keep it not concealed;
For from the moment that she weds the body
She shows it until death.
Obedient, gracious, full of noble shame,
She holds her early way,
And even the body she makes beautiful,
And all its limbs alert.
In years of youth, most temperate and strong,
Full of affection and of courteous praise,
Finding delight in lawful joys alone.
And in her later age,
Prudent and just and liberal to all;
Rejoicing in herself
To hear and speak of all that serveth man.
Then in the fourth and last part of her life,
Weds her again to God,

Contemplating the end of which she waits,
 And blessing the past years,
 Behold ye, now, how many are deceived!

VIII

Against these erring ones, canzone, go;
 And when thou shalt have come
 Unto that place wherein our Lady dwells,
 Keep not thy message hid from her, I pray;
 Thou well may'st tell it her!
 I go to speak to all men of thy friend.

Trans. by Katharine Hillard.

FROM THE INFERNO (XIII 64)

Envie is lauender of the Court alway:
 For she ne parteth, neither night nor day
 Out of the house of Caesar.

In Prologue to "The Legend of Good Women" v 358.

From The Purgatorio (VII, 121).

Ful selde up riseth by his branches smale
 Prowess of man, for God of his goodnesse
 Wol that we claim of him our gentillesse.

In Wife of Bath's Tale, v. 6711.

A Distinct Paraphrase

Of the Third Canzone of "Il Convito."

Here may we see well how that genterie
 Is not annexed to possession.

* * * * *

For God it wot, men moun ful often find
 A lordes son do shame and vilanie.

And he that wold han prise of his genterie
For he was boren of a gentil house,
And n'ill himselven do no gentil dedes,
Ne folwe his gentil ancestrie that ded es,
He is not gentil, be he duk or erl;
For villain's sinful dedes make a cherl.
For gentlenesse n'is but the renomes
Of thine auncestres, for his high bountie,
Which is a strange thing to thy persone:
Thy gentillesse cometh from God alone.

Trans. by Chaucer.

In Wife of Bath's Tale, v. 6729.

THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE

From Dante. Purgatorio XXVIII

Longing already to search in and round
The heavenly forest, dense and living-green,
Which to the eyes tempered the new-born day,

Withouten more delay I left the bank,
Crossing the level country slowly, slowly,
Over the soil, that everywhere breathed fragrance.

A gently-breathing air, that no mutation
Had in itself, smote me upon the forehead,
No heavier blow, than of a pleasant breeze,

Whereat the tremulous branches readily
Did all of them bow downwards towards that side
Where its first shadow casts the Holy Mountain:

Yet not from their upright direction bent
So that the little birds upon their tops
Should cease the practice of their tuneful art;

But, with full-throated joy, the hours of prime
Singing received they in the midst of foliage
That made monotonous burden to their rhymes,

Even as from branch to branch it gathering swells,
Through the pine forests on the shore of Chiassi,
When AEolus unlooses the Sirocco.

Already my slow steps had led me on
Into the ancient wood so far, that I
Could see no more the place where I had entered.

And lo! my farther course cut off a river,
Which, towards the left hand, with its little waves,
Bent down the grass, that on its margin sprang.

All waters that on earth most limpid are
Would seem to have within themselves some mix-
ture

Compared with that, which nothing doth conceal,

Although it moves on with a brown, brown current,
Under the shade perpetual, that never
Ray of the sun lets in, nor of the moon.

Trans. by Longfellow.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN THE PURGATORIO

By Dante

Our Father, Thou who dwellest in the heaven,
Not circumscribed, save as by greater sense
Of love which Thou to Thy first works hast given,
Praised be Thy name and Thine omnipotence
By every creature, as is meet and right
To render thanks to Thy sweet effluence.

Thy kingdom come to us in peace and might,
For of ourselves we may not it attain,
If it come not, with all our reason's height:
As of their will Thine angels chant their strain,
And high hosannas offer up alway,
So may all men like will to offer gain.
Our daily manna give to us this day,
Without which whoso through the desert bleak
Journeys, goes back, though pressing on his way.
And as the trespass men upon us wreak,
We forgive each, so, Lord, do Thou forgive,
Of Thy great goodness, nor our merit seek.
Our virtue, which so soon doth harm receive,
Put not to peril with our ancient foe,
But from his evil sting deliverance give.
This final prayer, dear Lord, from us doth flow,
Not for ourselves, for we no longer need,
But for their sakes whom we have left below.

Trans. by Dean E. H. Plumptre.

FROM "LA DIVINA COMMEDIA"

Beatrice's Reproach. Pg. XXX 124-32

No sooner had I reached maturity
And changed this life for life without an end
Than he to others turned, forsaking me.
When I from flesh to spirit did ascend,
And when my loveliness and goodness grew,
Less dear was I, less comfort could I lend.
A truthless road he took, turning anew,
Chasing deceptive shapes of happiness
Which never keep their promise full and true.

No Discontent in Heaven. Par. XV, 73-81

Then I began: "In every one of you,
As soon as Primal Balance met your sight,
Did inclination balance power to do;
Because the Sun that gave you heat and light
Desire and wit, hath such an even glow
That every best similitude is slight.
But mortal wish and wisdom, down below,
Unmated fly, uneven in their speed,
For reasons which ye heavenly spirits know."

God's Nature Revealed in His Works. Par X, 1-9

Looking upon His Offspring with the Love
Which everlastingly proceeds from each,
The primal unimagined Power above
Created all that circles in the reach
Of space or mind, so planfully, it must
Some taste of Him to every gazer teach.
Lift, reader, then, O lift with me thy lashes
And view the heavenly wheels, facing the spot
Where one rotation with another clashes.

Trans. by C. H. Grandgent.

ON THE PREPARATION FOR KNIGHTHOOD

SONNET

By Folgore da San Gemignano.—1340

Humility to him doth gently go,
And saith: I would in no wise weary thee;
Yet must I cleanse and wash thee thoroughly,
And I will make thee whiter than the snow.
Hear what I tell thee in few words, for so

Fain am I of thy heart to hold the key;
Now must thou sail henceforward after me;
And I will guide thee as myself do go.
But one thing would I have thee straightway leave;
Well knowest thou mine enemy is pride;
Let her no more unto thy spirit cleave:
So leal a friend with thee will I abide
That favor from all folk thou shalt receive;
This grace hath he who keepeth on my side.

Trans. by J. A. Symonds.

CANZONE XI. DURING THE LIFE OF LAURA

By Petrarch.—1304-1374

“O waters fresh and sweet and clear,
Where bathed her lovely frame,
Who seems the only lady unto me;
O gentle branch and dear,
(Sighing I speak thy name,)
Thou column for her shapely thighs, her supple
knee;
O grass, O flowers, which she
Swept with her gown that veiled
The angelic breast unseen;
O sacred air serene,
Whence the divine-eyed Love my heart assailed,
By all of ye be heard
This my supreme lament, my dying word.
Oh, if it be my fate
(As Heaven shall so decree)
That Love shall close for me my weeping eyes,
Some courteous friend I supplicate
Midst these to bury me,

Whilst my enfranchised spirit homeward flies;
Less dreadful death shall rise,
If I may bear this hope
To that mysterious goal.
For ne'er did weary soul

Find a more restful spot in all Earth's scope,
Nor in a grave more tranquil could win free
From outworn flesh and weary limbs to flee.

Perchance the time shall be
When to my place of rest,
With milder grace my wild fawn shall return
Here where she looked on me
Upon that day thrice blest:
Then she shall bend her radiant eyes that yearn
In search of me, and (piteous sight!) shall learn
That I, amidst the stones, am clay.
May love inspire her in such wise,
With gentlest breath of sighs,
That I, a stony corpse, shall hear her pray,
And force the very skies,
That I may wipe the tears from her dear eyes.

From the fair boughs descended
(Thrice precious memory!)
Upon her lap a shower of fragrant bloom.
Amidst that glory splendid,
Humbly reposèd she,
Attired as with an aureole's golden gloom.
Some blossoms edged her skirt, and some
Fell on her yellow curls,
Like burnished gold and pearls,
Even so they looked to me upon that day.
Some on the ground, some on the river lay,
Some lightly fluttering above,

Encircling her, seemed whispering: "Here reigns
Love."

How many times I cried,
As holy fear o'ercame,
"Surely this creature sprang from Paradise,"
Forgetting all beside
Her goddess mien, her frame,
Her face, her words, her lovely smile, her eyes.
All these did so devise
To win me from the truth, alas!
That I did say and sigh,
"How came I hither, when and why?"
Deeming myself in heaven, not where I was.
Henceforth this grassy spot
I love so much, peace elsewhere find I not.

My song, wert thou adorned to thy desire,
Thou couldst go boldly forth
And wander from my lips o'er all the earth.
Trans. by Emma Lazarus.

SONNET

By Francesco Petrarca

The soft west wind, returning, brings again
Its lovely family of herbs and flowers;
Progne's gay notes and Philomela's strain
Vary the dance of springtide's rosy hours;
And joyously o'er every field and plain
Glow the bright smile that greets them from above,
And the warm spirit of reviving love
Breathes in the air and murmurs from the main.
But tears and sorrowing sighs, which gushingly
Pour from the secret chambers of my heart,

Are all that spring returning brings to me;
And in the modest smile, or glance of art,
The song of birds, the bloom of heath and tree,
A desert's rugged tract and savage forms I see.

Trans. by G. W. Greene.

SONNET

By Francesco Petrarca

Still let them deem, who will, that Time's cold hand
Must break those ties which round the youthful
breast

Fond Love had twined in many a tender band
When Life first dawn'd in Hope's bright colours
drest.

For me, I care not whether Age severe
Bid o'er my brows the silvery tresses flow;
Still with Love's thrilling notes my lyre shall
glow,

Still hymn the lays to love and Laura dear.—
So may each minute of life's evening hour
Glide on with silent foot: and when no more
My soul can taste the joys it knew before—
When all the vision'd day-dreams of delight,
Which fancy erst had wove, have wing'd their
flight,

I'll bow my willing head to Fate's almighty power.

Trans. in "The Port Folio," March 1812.

CAPITOLO II

From "The Triumph of Death" by Petrarch

It was the night which closed that day of woe,
In which the sunlight of my life was hid,
And taken back to heaven, whence it came

To guide my erring steps. So I remain
As one deprived of sight, groping my way.
The air was filled, at that first hour of dawn,
With summer's softest breeze, whose gentle balm
Is wont from off the shapeless dreams of night
To lift the veil. And there came toward me,
Advancing, as it were, from out a group
Of blest, rejoicing souls, a Lady fair
And lovely as the year in this his prime,
With all the fairest Eastern jewels crowned.
She placed in mine that hand, which I so long
With fondest wish had coveted; and thus
Created in my heart a fount of joy.
Then sighing as she spoke, she thus began:
"Dost thou discern in me thy friend, thy guide
Who turned thy footsteps from the common way
While yet with gentle sway I ruled thy heart?"
And thoughtfully in grave and lowly guise
She made me sit beside her on a bank
O'ershadowed by a laurel and a beech.

"How should I not discern my angel pure?"
As one cast down with sorrow, I replied.
"In pity of my grief I pray thee say
If yet thou art indeed alive, or dead,"
"I am alive, and thou as yet art dead.
And such thou wilt remain," she answ'ring said,
"Until at length the solemn hour is struck
In which thou too shalt pass from off this earth.
Brief is our space of time, alas! not suited
To the extent and length of our discourse;
Therefore, be wise, restrain thy speech, and cease
Ere the day dawn which is so close at hand."

"We reach at length the end of this estate
Which we call life," I trembling said; "and then
I do beseech thee tell me, since by proof
Thou knowest it, is there in very truth
Such fearful sharpness in the pangs of death"?

"While yet thou followest the vulgar herd,"
She then replied, "seeking with all thy might
Its partial favor ever blind and hard,
In vain thou mayest hope for joy or peace.
Death only opens wide the prison gate
To faithful souls, setting them free. To those
Whose hopes and wishes grovel in this clay
Nor rise above it, it is bitter pain.
And now my death which doth thy soul so grieve
Would fill thee with all gladness, could'st thou
know

E'en but the thousandth part of my great joy."

Trans. by Catherine Mary Phillimore.

SONNET AFTER LAURA'S DEATH

By Petrarch

When all her golden beauty did uncloset
In Love's great noon and glory of desire,
Slipping her sheath, and yearning higher, higher,
Laura, my life, did leave me to my foes,
And living, lovely, disembodied, rose
To the white wicket and the shimmering choir.
Ah, why does not that "last day" come and tire
My soul for Heaven?—that last day one knows
But as the first in Heaven. The same way
That all my thoughts go, and as feather light,
My soul would rise, a pilgrim clean and gay.
Why must I wait, dear Christ? Why must I stay?

Bitter and ever bitterer grows the fight.
Had I but died three years ago to-day!

Trans. by Agnes Tobin.

SONNET TO PETRARCH AND FIAMMETTA

By Boccaccio.—1375

“Now hast thou left me, master dear; now art
At rest in that eternal house, where free
From earthly strife God-chosen souls shall be
When from this sinful world they do depart.
Now art thou where full many a time thy heart
Drew thee thy Laura once again to see;
Where with my beautiful Fiammetta she
In God’s most blissful presence taketh part.
Cino, Sennuccio, Dante, thee around,
Gazing on things our reason may not grasp,
Calmly abide in sempiternal rest.
If here thy trusty friend I have been found,
Draw me to thee, that I may see and clasp
Her who love’s flame first kindled in my breast.

Trans. by F. Hueffer.

A SONETTO A CODA

By Andrea Orcagna.—1389

Of Love this portrait many a poet brings,
A naked child with quiver and with bow,
And a white fillet tied beneath his brow
Across his eyes, and brightly coloured wings.
Thus Homer, and thus Ovid of him sings,
Virgil and others thus his portrait know;
But now Orcagna, painter, means to show
How they have erred in their imaginings.

If he is blind, his pranks how can he play?
If nude, who turns him out and lets him go?
The bow he bears what child could ever pull?
If youthful, where are all his years I pray?
If old, why is his stature still so low?
Thus all their reasonings I with ease annul.
Love is a pastime, this at least I know;
But he is neither made of wood or bone,
And yet he breaks the back of many a one.
Trans. by W. W. Story.

SONNET

THE VIOLETS ACCOUNT FOR THEIR COLOR

By Lorenzo de' Medici.—1449-1492 .

Not from the verdant garden's cultured bound
That breathes of Paestum's aromatic gale,
We sprung; but nurslings of the lonely vale,
'Midst woods obscure, and native glooms were
found;
'Midst woods and glooms, whose tangled brakes
around
Once Venus sorrowing traced, as all forlorn
She sought Adonis, when a lurking thorn
Deep on her foot impressed an impious wound.
Then prone to earth we bow'd our pallid flowers,
And caught the drops divine; the purple dyes
Tinging the lustre of our native hue:
Nor summer gales nor art-conducted showers
Have nursed our slender forms, but lovers' sighs
Have been our gales, and lovers' tears our dew.

Trans. by William Roscoe.

LINES FROM THE "ALTERCAZIONE"

By Lorenzo de' Medici

"Led on by pensive thought, I left erewhile
Those civil storms the restless city knows,
Pleased for a time to soothe my brow of toil,
And taste the little bliss that life bestows.
Thus with free steps my willing course I sped
Far from the circle of my native walls;
And sought the vale with thickest foliage spread
On whose calm breast the mountain shadow falls.
Charmed with the lowly spot, I sat me down
Where first the hill its easy slope inclines,
And every care that haunts the busy town
Fled, as by magic, from my tranquil mind."

A shepherd here interrupts the statesman's mus-
ings and inquires,

"Thy splendid halls, thy palaces forgot,
Can paths o'erspread with thorns a charm supply?
Or dost thou seek, from our severer lot
To give to wealth and power a keener joy?"

—Thus I replied—"I know no happier life,
No better riches than you shepherds boast,
Freed from the hated jars of civil strife,
Alike to treachery and to envy lost.
The weed, ambition, midst your furrowed field
Springs not, and avarice little root can find;
Content with what the changing seasons yield,
You rest in cheerful poverty resigned.
What the heart thinks the tongue may here dis-
close;

Nor inward grief with outward smiles is drest.
Not like the world—where wisest he who knows
To hide the secret closest in his breast.

Trans. by W. Roscoe.

HYMN

By Lorenzo de' Medici.—1448-1492

Follow that fervor, O devoted spirit,
With which thy Saviour's goodness fires thy breast!
Go where it draws, and when it calls, O hear it!
It is thy Shepherd's voice, and leads to rest.

In this thy new devotedness of feeling,
Suspicion, envy, anger have no claim;
Sure hope is highest happiness revealing,
With peace and gentleness and purest fame.

For in thy holy and thy happy sadness
If tears or sighs are sometimes sown by thee,
In the pure regions of immortal gladness
Sweet and eternal shall thine harvest be.

Leave them to say,—“This people's meditation
Is vain and idle”!—Sit with ear and eye
Fixed upon Christ, in childlike dedication,
O thou inhabitant of Bethany!

Trans. by W. Roscoe.

LINES FROM THE WRITINGS OF
GIROLAMO SAVONAROLO—1452-1498

I

This excommunication comes from Rome:
From Rome that spends its nights in harlotries,
Its noons in gossiping in choir, and turns
Altars to counters whereon gold may clink;

Upon the seat of Solomon it sits,
Provoking all that pass. It multiplies
In Italy, in France, in Spain—where not?
Its fornications. Out with thy sword, O Lord,
And smite this ribald, meretricious Church,
Its palaces, its pomp! Thy justice flash,
And give it up to hatred! Horses and dogs,
Courtiers and trappings, perfumes, tapestries,
Is this the Church of God? All things they sell,
Marriage and masses, pardons, benefices,
And excommunicate who will not buy.
I will not buy their favor.

II

Vanities! Vanities! Bring out your Vanities,
Rouge-pots and scented girdles, spices, gums,
Snares of the Evil One. Give up your drugs,
Intoxicating perfumes, subtle scents
That lull the soul to slumber and arouse
The sleeping senses in their swinish sty,
And make them nose for garbage. Give them all
up,
Lascivious fripperies, corsets and the bait
Of perforated sandals!

Vanities! Vanities! Bring out your Vanities,
All of your Vanities bring out to burn!
Unguents and patches, tresses false, and tricks
Of meretricious beauty, specious dyes,
Henna, vermillion, all of them Vanities.

Trans. by Alfred Austin.

A FLORENTINE CARNIVAL SONG

By Antonio Alamanni.—1521

Sung by a company of Masquers, habited as skeletons, on a car of Death designed by Piero di Cosimo

Sorrow, tears and penitence
Are our doom of pain for aye:
This dead concourse riding by
Hath no cry but penitence!

E'en as you are, once were we:
You shall be as now we are:
We shall see you dead men, where
Naught avails to take great care,
After sins, of penitence.

We too in the Carnival
Sang our love songs through the town:
Thus from sin to sin we all
Headlong, heedless, tumbled down:
Now we cry the world around,
Penitence! oh, penitence!

Senseless, blind and stubborn fools!
Time steals all things as he rides:
Honors, glories, states and schools

Pass away, and naught abides;
Till the tomb our carcass hides,
And compels this penitence.

This sharp scythe you see us bear,
Brings the world at length to woe:
But from life to life we fare;
And that life is joy or woe:
All heaven's bliss on him doth flow
Who on earth does penitence.

Living here, we all must die;
Dying, every soul shall live:
For the king of kings on high
This fixed ordinance doth give:
Lo, you all are fugitive!
Penitence! cry penitence!

Torment great and grievous dole
Hath the thankless heart mid you:
But the man of piteous soul
Finds much honor in our crew:
Love for loving is the due
That prevents this penitence.

Sorrow, tears and penitence
Are our doom of pain for aye:
This dead concourse riding by
Hath no cry but penitence!

Trans. by J. A. Symonds.

CHORUS FROM "LA MANDRAGOLA"

By Niccolò Macchiavelli.—1469-1527.

How happy is he, as all may see,
Who has the good fortune a fool to be,
And what you tell him will always believe.
No ambition can grieve,
No fear can affright him
Which are wont to be seeds
Of pain and annoy.
This doctor of ours,
'Tis not hard to delight him—
If you tell him 'twill gain him
His heart's wish and joy,
He'll believe in good faith that an ass can fly,—
Or that black is white and the truth a lie, —
All things in the world he may well forget—
Save the one whereon his whole heart is set.

Trans. by A. Werner.

THE RUINS OF ROME

By Baldassare Castiglione.—1478-1529

Ye sacred ruines, and ye tragick sights,
Which onely doo the name of Rome retaine,
Olde moniments, which of so famous sprights
The honour yet in ashes doo maintaine;
Triumphant Arcks, spyres, neighbours to the skie,
That you to see doth th' heaven it selfe appall;
Alas! by little ye to nothing flie,
The people's fable, and the spoyle of all.

Translated by Edmund Spenser.

ELEGY

By Jacopo Sannazzaro.—1458-1530

O pure and blessed soul,
That from thy clay's control
Escaped, hast sought and found thy native sphere,
And from thy crystal throne
Look'st down with smiles alone,
On this vain scene of mortal hope and fear!

Thy happy feet have trod
The starry spangled road
Celestial flocks by field and fountain guiding;
And from their erring track
Thou charm'st thy shepherds back,
With the soft music of thy gentle chiding.

O, who shall Death withstand,—
Death, whose impartial hand
Levels the lowest plant and loftiest pine?
When shall our ears again
Drink in so sweet a strain,
Our eyes behold so fair a form as thine?

*Trans. by Mrs. Hemans.*RUGGIERO IN THE ISLAND HOME OF
ALCINA

From "Orlando Furioso" by Ariosto.—1474-1533
There groves delightful of sweet laurel bowers,
Of palm-trees' and of pleasant myrtle's shade;
Cedars and orange-trees, whose fruits and flowers—
Wreathes diverse-shaped, but each one lovely
made—

Gave shelter sure in summer's hottest hours
To pilgrim 'neath their thick-pleached branches laid;
And 'mid those boughs, secure that none assail
Her flight, moved, singing sweet, the nightingale.

'Mid the red roses and the lilies white,
By mild airs ever with fresh life possessed,
The hares and conies sport which none affright;
And stags erect their proud and antlered crest
Dreading no hunter's snares or murderous might,
Then crop the grass and chew their cud at rest;
There, too, swift roes and nimble wild-goats bound,
Those many tenants of that sylvan ground.

And near beside, where rose a fount to view,
The which to girdle palms and cedars stand,
His shield he laid down, from his forehead drew
His helmet, and ungauntleted each hand;
Now to the mount, now to the sea's dark blue
He turned his face, by cool fresh breezes fanned,
Which with glad murmurs the high summits stir,
To trembling motion of the beech and fir.

THE LAMENT OF SACRIPANTE

The maiden pure is like unto that rose,
The which, while safe upon its native thorn
In some fair garden, it doth lone repose,
No flock has cropped, no shepherd's hand has torn;
Her leaves soft airs and dewy dawns uncloze,
Rains and rich soil with vivid hues adorn;
Her loving youths and maids delight to set
Upon their breast, or twine for coronet.

But from her mother-stem so soon as rent,
She from her leafy bower is riven away;

The favor, grace and beauty, by consent
Of men and heaven hers, no longer stay.
The maid who shows that pureness innocent
(Which should her fair eyes, yea, her life outweigh)
She prizes not—the place she held before
In each wise lover's heart can hold no more.

Trans. by the Author of "Family Jewels."

THE PARTING OF ZERBINO AND ISABELLA

From the "Orlando Furioso" of Ariosto

"So be thou pleased, my heart," (Zerbino cried,)
To love me yet, when I am dead and gone.
As to abandon thee without a guide,
And not to die, distresses me alone.
For did it me in place secure betide
To end my days, this earthly journey done,
I cheerful, and content, and fully blest
Would die, since I should die upon thy breast.

But since to abandon thee, to whom a prize
I know not, my sad fate compels, I swear,
My Isabella, by that mouth, those eyes,
By what enchained me first, that lovely hair:
My spirit, troubled and despairing, hies
Into hell's deep and gloomy bottom: where
To think thou wert abandoned so by me
Of all its woes the heaviest pain will be."

At this the sorrowing Isabel, declining
Her mournful face, which with her tears o'erflows,
Towards the sufferer, and her mouth conjoining
To her Zerbino's, languid as a rose;
Rose gathered out of season, and which pining
Fades where it on the shadowy hedgerow grows,

Exclaims, "Without me, think not so, my heart,
On this your last, long journey to depart.

'Of this, my heart, conceive not any fear.
For I will follow thee to heaven or hell;
It fits our souls together quit this sphere.
Together go, for aye together dwell.
No sooner closed thine eyelids shall appear
Than either me internal grief will quell,
Or has it not such power, I here protest
I with this sword to-day will pierce my breast."

'Twas here his feeble voice Zerbino manned,
Crying, "My deity, I beg and pray,
By that love witnessed, when thy father's land
Thou quittedst for my sake; and if I may
In anything command thee, I command
That, with God's pleasure, thou live out thy day:
Nor ever banish from thy memory
That, well as man can love, have I loved thee."

Trans. by William Stewart Rose.

SONNET ON POPE CLEMENT VII

By Francesco Berni.—1498-1535

A Papacy composed of compliment,
Debate, consideration, complaisance,
Of furthermore, then, but, yes, well, perchance,
Haply, and such-like terms inconsequent;
Of thought, conjecture, counsel, argument,
Starveling surmise to summon countenance,
Negotiations, audiences, romance,
Fine words and shifts, disbursement to prevent;

Of feet of lead, of tame neutrality,
Of patience and parade to outer view,
Of fawning Faith, of Hope and Charity,
Of innocence and good intentions too,
Which it were well to dub simplicity,
Uglier interpretations to eschew;
With your permission, you,
To speak the plain truth out, shall live to see
Pope Adrian sainted through this Papacy.

Trans. by J. A. Symonds.

THE POET TO HIS PATRON

By Francesco Berni.—1490-1536

O, Master Anthony, I am in love
With that fine doublet you've *not* given me!
I love, and wish it well as heartily
As 'twere the lady I call "Flower" and "Dove."
I look on't front and back—a perfect fit!
The more I look, the more I long for it.
It pleases me, inside and out,
And up and down. Oh! heaven,
That you have only lent me it, not given!
Oh! how I long for it, without a doubt!

When in the morn I see it on my back,
I always think that it must be my own;
That cunning stichery of herring-bone,
How great a marvel! I am on the rack!
I shall do something desperate,—good lack!
And will not-cannot understand
I must restore it to your hand—
Oh! how I long for it, without a doubt!

Oh! Master Anthony, if you knew how
To set about it, you a faction-chief
Might be. Look at me in this doublet now,—
Am I not gallant?—half a Mars, in brief?
Make up your mind you want it not again,
And I will be your brave,
Your foot-page and your slave,
And walk, with sword on thigh, among your train.

O canzonet!
If thou dost fail this doublet for to get,
Thou well may'st say I have
Been such a fool, I should be called a knave!
Trans. by A. Werner.

ORLANDO INNAMORATO, CANTO XX.

THE SUPPRESSED INDUCTION

By Francesco Berni

A brand-new story now compels my song.
To make the twentieth canto bright and clear,
Whence all the world shall plainly learn ere long
Some saints are not such saints as they appear;
For cowls, gray, blue or black, a moltey throng,
With dangling breviaries and brows severe,
And often naming on the lips our Lord,
While the heart's cold, no sanctity afford.

A cupping-glass upon your skull, a leech,
A blister, or a tonsure, are all one;
It will not help you though you gird your breech
With several braces or with one alone;
Or wear straight vestments, long and lank, that
reach

Like coachmen's great-coats to your heels, or drone
Gibberish and Paternosters:—Sainthood needs
More than fair words for foul and filthy deeds.

The hands are where true charity begins;
Not the mouth, face, or clothes: be mild, humane,
Reticent, sorry for your neighbor's sins,
Pitiful to his suffering and his pain:
Christians need wear no masks; who wears them,
wins

A back way to the fold, and brings it bane,
Scaling the wall of craft—a traitor he,
A thief and knave, who deals in subtlety.

These be that tribe of rogues and rascals whom
Our good Lord hates, the race of whom alone
In wrath he uttered that tremendous doom,
Though every other fault he could condone:
Ye whited sepulchers, ye living tomb,
Fire on the surface, in the soul a stone!
Why will ye wash the outside of the platter?
First cleanse your heart—that is the graver matter!

'Tis said by some that by and by the good
Pope and his prelates will reform their ways:
I tell you that a turnip has no blood,
Nor sick folk health, nor can you hope to raise
Syrup from vinegar to sauce your food:
The Church will be reformed when summer days
Come without gad-flies, when a butcher's store
Has neither bones nor dogs about the door.

* * * * *
The word of God, aroused from its long trance,
Runs like live fire abroad through Germany;
The work continues, as the days advance,
Unmasking that close-cloaked iniquity,

Which with a false and fraudulent countenance
So long imposed on France, Spain, Italy:
Now by the grace of God we've learned in sooth
What mean the words Church, Charity, Hope,
Truth.

Oh the great goodness of our heavenly Sire!
Behold, his Son once more appears on high,
Treads under foot the proud rebellious ire
Of faithless Churchmen, who by threat and lie
Strove to conceal the Love that did inspire
The mighty Maker of earth, sea, and sky,
What time he served, and bore our flesh, and trod
With blood the path that leads man back to God.

* * * * *

O Christians, with the hearts of Hebrews! Ye
Who make a mortal man your chief and head,
Of these new Pharisees first Pharisee!
Your soaring and immortal pinions spread
For that starred shrine, where, through eternity,
The Lamb of God is Pope, whose heart once bled
That men, blind men, from yon pure font on high
Might seek indulgence full and free for aye!

Yet that cooked crayfish hath the face to pray,
Kneeling in chapel opposite that crow,
That Antichrist, upon some holy day—
"Thou art out sail, our rudder."—when we know
The simple truth requires that he should say
"Thou art the God of ruin and of woe,
Father of infinite hypocrisies,
Of evil customs and all heresies!"

O Sanga, for our lord Verona's sake,
Put by your Virgil, lay Lucretius down,
Ovid, and him in whom such joy you take,

Tully, of Latin eloquence the crown!
With arms out-spread, our heart's arms, let us make
To Him petition, who, without our own
Merit or diligence or works, can place
Our souls in heaven, made worthy by his grace!

And prithee see that Molza is aware,
And Navagero, and Flaminio too,
That here far other things should be our care
Than Janus, Flora, Thetis, and the crew
Of Homer's gods, who paint their page so fair!
Here we experience the false and true;
Here find that Sun, which shows without, within,
That man by nature is compact of sin.

Trans. by J. A. Symonds.

SONNET TO ITALY

By Giovanni Guidiccioni.—1500-1541

From deep and slothful slumber, where till now
Entombed thou liest, waken, breathe, arise!
Look on those wounds with anger in thine eyes,
Italia, self-enslaved in folly's slough!
The diadem of freedom from thy brow
Torn through thine own misdoing, seek with sighs;
Turn to the path, that straight before thee lies,
From yonder crooked furrow thou dost plow.
Think on thine ancient memories! Then shalt see
That those who once thy triumphs did adorn,
Have chained thee to their yoke with fetters bound.
Foe to thyself, thine own iniquity,
With fame for them, for thee fierce grief and scorn,
To this vile end hath forced thee, Queen dis-
crowned.

Trans. by J. A. Symonds.

HISTORICAL SONNET

By Veronica Gambara.—1485-1550

Let conquered be your scorn and ancient hate,
O Charles and Francis, by the holy name
Of Christ, and for his Faith such ardor claim
As proves you worthy of such high estate.
Let your arms ever ready be t' abate
The rage of His despisers; let not blame
Be yours for Italy's and Europe's shame,
And blight of sea and hill and sweet retreat.
The Shepherd to whose trust were giv'n the keys
Of Heaven turns to both of you to urge
That pity for his flocks may quench your ire.
Let pity, and not scorn, descend on these,
Ye royal pair, and in but one desire
For vengeance on Christ's foes your rancors merge.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

STANZAS FROM "THE ORLANDINO"

By Teofilo Folengo.—1492-1544

To Thee, and not to any saint I go;
How should their mediation here succeed?
The Canaanitish woman, well I know,
Prayed not to James or Peter in her need;
She had recourse to only Thee; and so,
Alone with Thee alone, I hope and plead.
Thou know'st my weal and woe; make plain the way
Thou, Lord, for to none other dare I pray.

Nor will I wander with the common kind,
Who, clogged with falsehood and credulity,
Make vows to Gothard and to Roch or mind
I know not what Saint Bovo more than Thee;
Because some friar, as cunning as they're blind,
Offering to Moloch, his dark deity,
Causes Thy Mother, up in heaven, a Queen,
To load with spoil his sacrifice obscene.

Beneath the husk of piety these friars
Make a huge harvest for themselves to hold;
The alms on Mary's altar quench the fires
Of impious greed in priests who burn for gold:
Another of their odious laws requires
That year by year my faults should still be told
To a monk's ears:—I who am young and fair!
—He hears and straightway flogs his shoulders bare!

He flogs himself because he feels the sting
My words, impregnate with lasciviousness,
Send to his heart; so sharp are they and wring
His lust so nearly, that in sore distress,
With wiles and wheedling ways, he seeks to bring
Me in his secret will to acquiesce;
And here confessors oft are shown to be
More learned in pimping than divinity.

Therefore, O Lord, that know'st the heart of man,
And seest Thy Church in these same friars' grasp,
To Thee with contrite soul, as sinners can,
Who hope their faults forgiven, my hands I clasp;
And, if, my God, from this mad ocean
Thou'lt save me, now, as at my latest gasp,
I vow that never more will I trust any
Who grant indulgences for pound or penny.

Such prayers, chock-full of rankest heresy,
Prayed Berta; for she was a German wench:
In those days, you must know, theology
Had changed herself to Roman, Flemish, French;
But I've my doubts that in the end she'll be
Found squatting à la Moor on some Turk's bench,
Because Christ's seamless coat has been so tattered,
Its rags have long since to the winds been scattered.

Trans. by J. Addington Symonds.

SONNET CLXXIV

By Vittoria Colonna.—1490-1547

Pure Lamb of God! who didst the Heavens resign,
—Their lofty pastures for this lowly fold
Of Earth—who didst conceal in humble mould
Thy clear, eternal radiancy divine;
When shall this miserable heart of mine
Stamp thy pure likeness on its being cold,
And I rise upward from my vile state, bold
To escape from foes who 'gainst my soul combine?
When shall I write with more praiseworthy pen
How, full of pity, Thou didst then renew
The blind world which had sure deserved thy rod?
And how, to bear the heavy sins of men
Thou didst make of Thyself an offering true,
Ineffable, to the Eternal God!

Trans. in "The In Memoriam of Italy."

SONNET XLVIII FROM
"RIME SACRE E MORALI"

By Vittoria Colonna.—1490-1547

"Oft time to God thro' frost and cloud I go
For light and warmth to break my icy chain,
And pierce and rend my veils of doubt in twain
With His divinest love and radiant glow,
And if my soul sit cold and dark below,
Yet all her longings fixed on Heaven remain;
And seems she 'mid deep silence, to a strain
To listen, which the soul alone can know:
Saying, "Fear not! for Jesus came on earth,—
Ruler of an eternal, ample sea—
To ease each heavy load of mortal birth.
His waters ever clearest, sweetest be
To him, who in an humble bark drifts forth
On His great deeps of Goodness, trustfully."

Trans. by J. G. M.

SONNET XCVIII

By Vittoria Colonna.—1547

"Ah! would I could, storm-beaten by the wave
Of this world troublous, enter in the ark
With Noah, dear to God! no other barque
In such a perilous sea avails to save!
Or with the Hebrew squadrons, bold and brave,
The Red Sea rolling o'er their foemen mark!
Then safe on shore, freed from all care and cark,
Thank God by singing a triumphant stave.

O that with Peter, my poor heart, when it
Feels its faith failing at the billows' heaving,
Might be uplifted by the Hand Divine.
Still, if to theirs my being doth not fit,
I know Heaven's favor my heart is not leaving,
And that its blessed help will still be mine."

Trans. in "The In Memoriam of Italy."

SONNET

By Gaspara Stampa.—1524-1554

Sad and repentant for my errors grave,
And for imaginations false and light,
—For having wasted days erstwhile so bright
In earthly pleasures that time cannot save,
To Thee, O Lord, who stillest hearts that rave
And tak'st from frozen snow its deadly blight,
And rescuest the soul from bitt'rest plight
That does most ardently thy mercy crave,
To Thee I come; and pray Thou'll not disdain
To draw me from the deep in which I lie,
From which for me to try to rise 'twere vain.
For us it was that Thou didst will to die;
Thou didst buy back our race with tears and pain;
Sweet Lord, let me not perish now, I cry.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

SONNET

By Laura Battifera.—16th Century

When to the heavens my eyes uplifted are,
Which many a light and glorious adorns,
With his who in his goings and returns
Paints all the earth with flowers, and fires each star,
Wondering I say, and yet more glorious far
That heaven of heavens where the Most High
 sojourns,
Who Himself moveless, all around Him turns,
And fills with love that naught can change or mar.
Ye stars! more radiant are the souls elect
And those dear spirits that together move,
Circling in concourse sweet the Eternal Pole.
What happy influence! what divine effects
By them are wrought! They seem to lift my soul
And bear it to the source of truth and love.

Trans. by W. W. Story.

SONNET

By Monsignor Giovanni della Casa.—1503-1556

O Sleep, O tranquil son of noiseless Night,
Of humid, shadowy Night; O dear repose
For wearied men, forgetfulness of woes
Grievous enough the bloom of life to blight!
Succor this heart that hath outgrown delight,
And knows no rest; these tired limbs compose;
Fly to me, Sleep; thy dusky vans disclose
Over my languid eyes, then cease thy flight.

Where, where is Silence, that avoids the day?
Where the light dreams, that with a wavering tread
And unsubstantial footing follow thee?
Alas! in vain I call thee; and these gray,
These frigid shades flatter in vain. O bed,
How rough with thorns! O nights, how harsh to
me!

Trans. by J. A. Symonds.

THE ART OF ENJOYING.

ADVICE TO HER SON

By the Duchess Del Vastogirardi.—16th Century

There are who think that gay must be his heart
Whose pleasures many and diverse may be;
And therefore take in argument the part
That he's immersed in boredom and ennui
Who finds himself compelled to draw the bound
Within whose limits his delights are found.

But O my son, it is not true: that soul
Enjoys as is more mod'rate its content:
Tranquil he is, nor e'er does such a rôle
Breed longing or disgust or give torment.
Too great a joy is followed oft by sorrow,
Excess to-day begets a sad to-morrow.

For ennui to the rich is as a flail
In midst of all the adulating host,
In vain the ample pleasures they may hail,
And know that none is wanting, none is lost,
When they believe the fates the foe deride,
Confused, they see it seated at their side.

He errs who thinks this tedium to eschew
And to withdraw from its insidious quest
Now 'mid nocturnal scenes whose charms none rue,
Now passing nights at tables richly drest;
Without regard it boldly brings its face,
Demanding on the gilded stage a place.

Oh! if thou dost desire against thy foe,
Importunate ennui, a useful bar,
Let labor often lay thy pastimes low,
And interrupt thy joys whate'er they are.
Impress thy thought with this truth as a treasure,
That a continual pleasure is not pleasure.

A flower is every innocent delight
That here upon our lowly, mortal path
Heaven scatters in compassion for our plight;
The loveliest flower, nathless, a thorn oft hath;
And he in vain will try to gather such
Who handles not the flower with lightest touch.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

NEAPOLITAN SONG

One morning, on the seashore as I strayed,
My heart dropped in the sand beside the sea;
I asked of yonder mariners, who said
They saw it in thy bosom,—worn by thee.
And I am come to seek that heart of mine,
For I have none, and thou, alas! hast two;
If this be so, dost know what thou shalt do?—
Still keep my heart, and give me, give me thine.

Trans. in "North American Review," 1848.

Lines FROM THE GREEK OF
OLYMPIA MORATA.—1528-1557

No joy is still a joy to all mankind,
For Jove hath given to each a different mind.
Castor and Pollux by a different aim
Tho' twin-born brothers seek the path to fame.
And I, tho' woman, womanly gear have left,
Distaff and threads and work-basket and weft!
The Muses' haunts, Parnassus' flowery hill,
These have been all my joy, these shall be still.
For other pleasures other maids have sighed.
These are my glory, these my joy and pride.

Trans. by T. A. Trollope.

A NEAPOLITAN BALLAD

Author Unknown

"Daughter, the night was made for sleep,
Why dost thou watch? Why dost thou weep?
Who soweth love must sorrow reap;
Daughter, daughter, my daughter"!

"Mother, I can nor rest nor pray,
Six long months since he sail'd away;
This should have been our wedding-day,
Nello, Nello, my Nello"!

"Daughter, anon the day will break;
Six candles we to church will take,
And pray the Virgin for his sake,
Daughter, daughter, my daughter"!

"Mother, me seems the night wind cries,
'Lone on the sands thy lover lies,
With none to close his glazed eyes'
Nello, Nello, my Nello"!

"Daughter, the gale is loud and wild,
By thy own heart thou art beguil'd;
Mother of Grace, look on my child;
Daughter, daughter, my daughter"!

"Mother, when Nello sail'd away
One kiss he asked, I said him nay;
The debt I owe, the debt I'll pay;
Nello, Nello, my Nello"!

"Daughter, the demon's cruel art
Wreaketh worst wrong through true love's
smart;
Daughter, come back, or break my heart!
Daughter, daughter, my daughter"!

"On sand-bed take, from willing bride
This wedding kiss, death-sanctified;
Our coverlet the rising tide;
Nello, Nello, my Nello"!

Trans. Unknown.

A HYMN

Author Not Given

Where shall I find, in all this fleeting earth,
This world of changes and farewells a friend
That will not fail me in his love and worth,
Tender, and firm, and faithful to the end?

Far hath my spirit sought a place of rest—
Long on vain idols its devotion shed;
Some have forsaken whom I loved the best,
And some deceived, and some are with the dead.

But thou, my Saviour! thou my hope and trust,
Faithful art thou when friends and joys depart,
Teach me to lift these yearnings from the dust,
And fix on Thee, the Unchanging One, my heart.

Trans. by Felicia Hemans.

THE TRANCE OF LOVE

Author Not Given

Love in a drowsy mood one day
Reclined with all his nymphs around him,
His feathered darts neglected lay,
And faded were the flowers that crowned him.
Young Hope, with eye of light, in vain
Led smiling Beauty to implore him,
While Genius poured his sweetest strain,
And Pleasure shook his roses o'er him.

At length a stranger sought the grove,
And fiery Vengeance seemed to guide him,
He rudely tore the wreaths of Love,
And broke the darts that lay beside him.
The little god now wakeful grew,
And, angry at the bold endeavor,
He rose and wove his wreaths anew,
And strung his bow more firm than ever.

When, lo! the invader cried, "Farewell!
My skill, bright nymphs, this lesson teaches—
While Love is sprightly bind him well
With smiles and songs and honeyed speeches;
But should dull languor seize the god,
Recall me on my friendly mission;
For know when Love begins to nod,
His surest spur is opposition.

Trans. by N. P. Willis.

SONNET ON DANTE

By Michael Angelo.—1475-1564

He sank from earth to the abysses blind,
And saw both hells, and lived, and made ascent
To God, led by his thought magnificent,
Whose light of truth he poured on us mankind.
That lordly star of price in our night shined
Revealing the eternal; ere it went
This muddy world such wages on it spent
As to our choicest souls is still assigned.
Ill greeted by his people's thanklessness
Were Dante's labors, Dante's high desire;
Only the just man these forbear to bless.
Were but such birthright mine! might I aspire
To his sharp exile, to his righteousness,
No man's estate on earth were lifted higher.

Trans. by O. Elton.

MADRIGAL BY MICHELANGELO

On The Loss of Florentine Liberty.—1530

“Lady, for joy of lovers numberless
Thou wast created fair as angels are.
Sure God hath fallen asleep in heaven afar
When one man calls the bliss of many his!
Give back to streaming eyes
The daylight of thy face, that seems to shun
Those who must live defrauded of their bliss!
Vex not your pure desire with tears and sighs,
For he who robs you of my light hath none.
Dwelling in fear, sin hath no happiness;
Since, amid those who love, their joy is less,
Whose great desire great plenty still curtails,
Than theirs who, poor, have hope that never fails.”
Trans. by J. A. Symonds.

SONNET TO MICHAEL ANGELO

By Monsignor Lodovico Beccadelli

If hopefully I crossed the German snow,
Crossed the high Alps in hope, and left my home
To see you, Michelagnolo, and Rome,
And spite of hoping, found it pain to go:
Considering, now my westering sun is low,
And all before me is the great sea's foam,
And round me mountains, and rude heathendom,
What comfort is there that my heart can know?

A voice celestial is my only guide,
That speaks within my soul from day to day,
Saying: “Take this new cross; let it abide

A ladder up to heaven, so that you may,
If safe you cross the narrow earthly tide,
Have with your Buonarroti joyous stay."

Trans. in Littell's Living Age. 1888.

MICHAEL ANGELO'S REPLY

God's cross and grace, my Lord, and many a pain
May give us hope to meet in Paradise:
Still, ere the last breath go, might some device
Bring us together here on earth again!
Though seas and Alps and stony ways detain
One from the other, yet no cowardice
Gains on the soul, for any snow or ice;
The wings of thought have neither leash nor rein.
With those wings I can always fly to you,
And with you mourn Urbino, who is dead,
Who might have helped me, had he lived, to win
Your home, as we proposed; but I pursue
Another course, and by his death am led
Where he awaits my coming at his Inn.

Trans. in Littell's Living Age. 1888.

SONNET TO GIORGIO VASARI

By Michael Angelo

The voyage of my life is all but done:
Over a stormy sea my shallop frail
Draws to the common haven, where the tale
Is counted of the works of every one.
"What freights of error!" (thus the reckonings run)
Desires that in a man's own spite prevail,
"And vain imagination, crying hail
To art the tyrant on his idol throne!"

Of early amorous longings, light and gay,
What resteth, if the twofold death be mine?
(One death is sure, and one has sore alarms;)
Painting nor sculpture can have power to stay
The soul appealing to the Lord Divine,
Who on the cross to save us stretched his arms.

Trans. in Littell's Living Age. 1888.

MADRIGAL LXXVIII

By Michael Angelo

Led so many years to my last day,
Full late, O world, thy flatteries I divine;
Thou holdest out a peace that is not thine,
And rest, that ere its dawning dies away.
The shame and the dismay
Of years that draw to closing,
One thing alone renew,
The old sweet fatal sway,
Though all therein reposing
Destroy the soul and small delight ensue;
I say, and hold it true,
As of myself, that he is chiefly blest,
Who being born makes ending speediest.

Trans. in Littell's Living Age. 1888.

CANZONE
ON THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER AND
BROTHER

By Michael Angelo

'Tis true, that, since to the serene abode
Ye are returned (as Love doth whisper me),
I ought to still the grief that fills my breast.
Unjust is grief, that wellet in the heart,
For those who bear their harvest of good deeds
To heaven, released from all earth's crooked ways—
Yet cruel were the man that should not weep,
When he may never here behold again
Him who first gave him being, nourishment.
Our sufferings are more or less severe
In just proportion to our sense of pain;
And thou, O Lord, dost know how weak I am.
But if the soul to reason yield consent,
So cruel the restraint that checks my tears,
That the attempt but makes me suffer more.
And if the thought in which I steep my soul
Did not assure me that thou now canst smile
Upon the death thou'st feared in this world,
I had no comfort: but the painful stroke
Is tempered by a firm abiding faith
That he who lives aright finds rest in heaven.
The infirmities of flesh so weigh upon
Our intellect, that death more sorrow brings,
The more with false persuasion sense prevails.
For ninety years had the revolving sun
In the far ocean yearly, bathed his fires,
Ere thou wert gathered to the peace of heaven.
Now heaven has ta'en thee from our misery,

Have pity still for me, though living, dead,
Since God hath willed me to be born through thee.
Thou art released from death, and made divine,
Fearing no longer change of life or will:
Scarce can I write it without envying.

Trans. by J. E. Taylor.

MADRIGAL LXXXIII

By Michael Angelo

By keenest ice beset, by burning fire,
By years and woes, and now by shame harassed,
The future in the past
I mirror, and my hope is sorrow and pain;
The joys that swift expire
A burden are, like curses that remain;
Of fortune, good and evil, of them twain,
That weary of me, I would have release:
The blessing of the years is that they cease,
And time is best approved when time is flown,
Since sorrow is assuaged by death alone.

Trans. in Littell's Living Age. 1888.

SONNET

By Michael Angelo

There's no idea of the sculptor's mind,
Which marble does not in its mass contain.
The artist's hand, serving his wit, will gain
The image in superfluous stone confined.
The death I flee from, with my life combined,
Thou keepest, lady of the high disdain,
As in the block the god; and I would fain
Shape love and life, but all my art is blind.

Then neither chance, nor fate, nor power above,
Nor thy great beauty, lady, nor thy scorn,
Is guilty of the wreck that followeth,
If in thy soul thou guardest death and love,
And all my pitiful base craft forlorn,
For all its labor, shape not love but death.

Trans. in Littell's Living Age. 1888.

SONNET

By Michael Angelo

'Tis strange, Madonna, yet we know 'tis so,
From long experience, that all forms endure,
More living, in the sculpture's stone secure,
However with the years the sculptors go!
Thus effects rise, though causes be brought low,
And art outshines all natural things obscure;
I know this, and my proof has been made sure,
In works that time nor death can overthrow.

Thus, length of days to us my art will give,
In painting of hewn marble, putting on
The likeness of our faces, thine and mine:
A thousand years will pass, and we shall live:—
"How fair she was, and he how woe-be-gone!"
They'll say, and read my wisdom in that sign.

Trans. in Littell's Living Age. 1888.

THE HAPPINESS OF A PASTORAL LIFE

By Bernardo Tasso.—1493-1569

Thrice happy shepherd race
Who live content upon your humble store
Full in the heaven's kind face;
Far from the crowd's wild roar,
Ye fear no winds, or waves that lash the shore.

We live mid each dull care
Which in the troubled waters man must meet;
The chiefest joys we share
Are as the shadows fleet,
And far more full of bitter than of sweet.

A thousand thoughts await
With anxious mien the dawn of every day;
Which like some gloomy Fate,
Track us along our way,
And from our shadowed life take all the joy away.

A thousand mad desires
Bring trouble down on us with gloomy wings;
Our dark unholy fires,
Despair of better things,
Fill all our soul with vain imaginings.

While ye, at break of day,
Rise gaily up and hail the happy morn;
The meadow's flowery way
By you is duly shorn
Of all the treasures on its wide face born.

Then as the day grows bright,
Your flocks towards the pastures move along;
With hearts all pure and light,
And free from every wrong,
Your labours ye beguile with blithesome song.

Oft in some valley deep
Which never glowed beneath the sun's warm look,
All undisturbed ye sleep,
In some sequestered nook
Where echo answers to the rippling brook.

Or on its bank, mid flow'rs,
With some fair shepherdess in converse low,
Ye pass the summer hours,
Scarce recking how they go;
And weariness all day ye never know.

For you the autumn brings
Of purple grapes and apples bright its store,
Their most delicious things
The honey-bees hand o'er;
The cattle haste their milky draughts to pour.

Or when the wintry skies
Bring long surcease to all your summer mirth,
Amid the snows and ice
Ye sit around the hearth,
And let the draughts of wine to joy give birth.

A quiet, tranquil life,
Where all our mad delights and griefs ye miss,
With peace unbroken rife.
How much I envy this
I dare not say—how near to perfect bliss.

Trans. in Littell's Living Age, Sept., 1873.

MADRIGAL

Written in Prison in the Castle of Sant'Angelo

By Benvenuto Cellini.—1500-1571

From this low prison wall,
O God, immortal God, on Thee I call,
Weary and weak with pain,
For I am bound; Oh! pardon, break my chain,
Open thy ears and make me free again.
Who in this cell of stone
Can blameless be? And if 'Thou dost insist
Upon repentance, is there anyone
Of thy frail servants able to resist?
Of flesh and blood and bone
Weak we are made; for so thou dost ordain:
Oh! then, have pity on us in our pain.

Trans. by W. W. Story.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN MIND
AND BODY

By Benvenuto Cellini.—1500-1571

Oh troubled spirit mine,
Cruel! how sad is this surviving!
If 'gainst us stands the will divine,
Who is there for us, succor giving?
Away, away to better living.

Ah, wait awhile,
For happier days will be,
Heaven promises, than e'er you knew before.

The coming hours will smile,
Since the great God has granted free
Grace that will never turn to weeping more.

Translator Unknown.

SONNET

TO PIETRO MANELLI OF FLORENCE

By Tullia D'Aragona.—16th Century

As when from her abhor'd captivity
Fair Philomel hath fled, and proudly takes
Her way thro' grassy meads and bushy brakes
Restored to joyous life and liberty;
So I, from amorous bonds escaping free,
All torment scorning, and the poignant aches
Of grief untold, which too much loving makes
The doom of such as love-bewildered be,
Had borne (alas! my hapless stars!) away
My garments from the Cyprian Goddess' shrine
Proud of the feat, when Love to me did say,
I will transform that stubborn will of thine;
And so he made me captive to thy power,
Renewing all my torments from that hour.

Trans. by T. A. Trollope.

THE GARDEN OF ARMIDA

From "Jerusalem Delivered" by Tasso

As that faire starre, the messenger of morn
His deawy face out of the sea doth reare;
Or as the Cyprian goddess, newly borne
Of th' Ocean's fruitful froth, didst first appeare:
Such seemèd they, and so their yellow heare
Christalline humor droppèd downe apace.

* * * * *

Withall she laughèd and she blusht withall,
That blushing to her laughter gave more grace,
And laughter to her blushing.

* * * * * * * *

The whiles some one did chaunt this lovely lay:
Ah! see whoso fayre thing doest faine to see,
In springing floure the image of thy day.
Ah! see the Virgin Rose, how sweetly shee
Doth first peep foorth with bashful modestee,
That fairer seems the less ye see her may.
Lo! see soone after how more bold and free
Her barèd bosom she doth broad display;
Lo! see soone after how she fades and falls away.

So passeth, in the passing of a day,
Of mortal life the leafe, the bud, the floure;
Ne more doth flourish after first decay.
That earst was sought to deck both bed and boure
Of many a lady', and many a paramoure.
Gather, therefore, the Rose whilst yet is prime,
For soone comes age that will her pride defloure;
'Gather the Rose of love whilst yet is time,
Whilst loving thou mayst lovèd be with equal
crime.

Trans. by Edmund Spenser.

CONCLUDING LINES OF "TORRISMONDO"

A Tragedy by Tasso.—1544-1595

Ah! flowing tears! O piercing pain!
Life fleets apace; it crumbles in decay;
As ice, it melts away.
E'en mountains break, and scatter o'er the plain

Each shattered block.
The mightiest stock
By conflict raised to glory, fades amain
As Spring before the sun. Fame's choicest bloom
Lies withered on the tomb.
Life speeds, as down a cliff the waters splash.
As a meteor's flight
Through the inky night,
As air, or smoke, or as the arrow's flash
Fleets human triumph, passes human power;
Fades as a helpless flower.
What look we for? what hope have we? what praise?
Of glory's proud scroll
What is left for the soul?
Sorrow and woe and black, lamenting days.
O youth and love and life, what is your gain
But flowing tears, but piercing pain?
Trans. by William Boulting.

AN ADDRESS TO A FAITHLESS FRIEND

By Tasso

Fate's sharpest arrow had not hurt so sore
Nor Envy's venom'd fang. By both assailed
I deemed my guileless heart completely mailed.
I scorned the thought that aught could wound me
more.
Then thou, whom in my heart of hearts I wore
And as a champion and deliv'rer sought,
Turned on thy friend the very arms he wrought.
Doth Heaven look on and suffer what I bore?
O sacred faith and love, are all thy laws
Thus mocked and set at naught? I throw away
My armour. Vaunt of men the vain applause,

Traitor, it is thy perjured love, I say,
The striker, not the wound, salt tears doth cause.
Thy fault, and not my pain, doth on me weigh.

Trans. by William Boultong.

Based on a translation by Bishop Milman. 1850.

CANZONE

TO THE PRINCESSES OF FERRARA

By Torquato Tasso

Fair daughters of Renée! my song
Is not of pride and ire,
Fraternal discord, hate and wrong
Burning in life and death so strong,
From rule's accursed desire,
That even the flames divided long
Upon their funeral pyre:*

But you I sing, of royal birth,
Nursed on one breast like them;
Two flowers, both lovely, blooming forth
From the same parent stem,—
Cherished by heaven, beloved by earth,—
Of each a treasured gem!

To you I speak, in whom we see
With wondrous concord blend
Sense, worth, fame, beauty, modesty,—
Imploring you to lend
Compassion to the misery
And sufferings of your friend.
The memory of years gone by,
O, let me in your hearts renew,—
The scenes, the thoughts o'er which I sigh,
The happy days I spent with you!

* Eteocles and Polynices.

And what, I ask, and where am I,—
And what I was, and why secluded,—
Whom did I trust, and who deluded?

Daughters of heroes and of kings,
Allow me to recall
These and a thousand other things
Sad, sweet and mournful all!
From me few words, more tears, grief wrings,—
Tears burning as they fall.
For royal halls and festive bowers,
Where, nobly serving, I
Shared and beguiled your private hours,
Studies and sports I sigh;
And lyre, and trump, and wreathèd flowers;
Nay, more, for freedom, health, applause,
And even humanity's lost laws!

Why am I chased from human kind?
What Circe in the lair
Of brutes thus keeps me spell-confined?
Nests have the birds of air,
The very beasts in caverns find
Shelter and rest, and share
At least kind Nature's gifts and laws;
For each his food and water draws
From wood and fountain, where
Wholesome, and pure, and safe, it was
Furnished by Heaven's own care;
And all is bright and blest, because
Freedom and health are there!

I merit punishment, I own;
I erred, I must confess it; yet
The fault was in the tongue alone,—

The heart is true. Forgive! forget!—
I beg for mercy, and my woes
May claim with pity to be heard;
If to my prayers your ears you close,
Where can I hope for one kind word,
In my extremity of ill?
And if the pang of hope deferred
Arise from discord in your will,
For me must be revived again
The fate of Metius,* and the pain.

I pray you, then, renew for me
The charm that made you doubly fair;
In sweet and virtuous harmony
Urging resistlessly my prayer
With him, for whose loved sake I swear,
I more lament my fault than pains,
Strange and unheard-of as they are.

Trans. by Richard Henry Wilde.

* He was torn asunder.

FROM THE SICILIAN

Ye shadowy forms!—Night's offspring! ye that
wreathe

Your darkening horrors round these forests deep,
And in these caves your silent dwelling keep;
O that I here amid your glooms, might breathe
Th' expiring sigh! and when the guilty maid
Shall wander where my lowly tomb is laid,
O say that here, "life's fitful fever o'er,"
He, whom her scorn hath kill'd, now finds
repose;—

Haply across her cheek some tear may steal;
Yet deem not that the tear from Pity flows;

For Pity sure that breast can never feel:
Her eyes will weep, because there lives no more
One who for her with hopeless flames will burn,
And mourn with fruitless sighs, and love without
return.

Translated in "The Port Folio", March, 1812.

SONNET

By Luigi Tansillo.—1596

Now that these wings to speed my soul ascend,
The more I feel vast air beneath my feet,
The more toward boundless air on pinions fleet,
Spurning the earth, soaring to heaven I tend;
Nor makes them stoop their flight the direful end
Of Daedal's son; but upward still they beat.
What life the while with my life can compete,
Though dead to earth I shall at last descend?
My own heart's voice in the void air I hear;
"Where wilt thou bear me, O rash man? Recall
Thy daring will! This boldness waits on fear!"
"Dread not," I answer, "that tremendous fall!
Strike through the clouds and smile when death is
near,

If death so glorious be our doom at all!"

Trans. by J. A. Symonds.

LINES FROM "IL PASTOR FIDO"

By Battista Guarini.—1539-1612

SILVIO

Go you that lodg'd the monster, as y'are wont,
Amongst the neighb'ring sheepcoats raise the hunt.
Rouse eyes and hearts with your shrill voice and
 horn,

If ever in Arcadia there was born
A shepherd, who did follow Cynthia's court,
As a true lover of her rural sport,
Within whose quarry-scorning mind, had place
The pleasure or the glory of the chase;
Now let him show that courage and that love
By following me, where in a little grove
To valor a large field does open lie.
That dreadful boar, I mean that prodigy
Of nature and the woods, that huge, that fell
And noted'st tyrant that did ever dwell
And reign in Erimanthus; the field's mower,
The mower's terror. Go you then before,
And do not only with your early horn
Anticipate, but wake the drowsy morn.

* * * * *

To thee whose heart is hardly yet awake,
The whole world sleeps.

LINCO

O Silvio, Silvio,
Why did frank nature upon thee bestow
Blossoms of beauty in thy prime, so sweet
And fair, for thee to trample under feet?

Had I thy fresh and blooming cheek, adieu
I'd say to beasts, and nobler game pursue.
The summer I would spend in feast and mirth
In the cool shade, the winter by the hearth.

SILVIO

How's this? Thou art not Linco sure, for he
Such counsel never used to give to me.

LINCO

As the occasion, counsels change, 'tis true;
If I were Silvio, so indeed I'd do.

SILVIO

And I, if I were Linco, would do so;
But as I am, I'll do like Silvio.

Trans. by Sir Richard Fanshaw.

AN EPITAPH

By Gabriello Chiabrera.—1637

Pause courteous spirit!—Balbi supplicates
That thou, with no reluctant voice, for him
Here laid in mortal darkness, wouldst prefer
A prayer to the Redeemer of the world.
This to the dead by sacred right belongs;
All else is nothing.—Did occasion suit
To tell his worth, the marble of this tomb
Would ill suffice: for Plato's lore sublime
And all the wisdom of the Stagyrte
Enriched and beautified his studious mind:
With Archimedes also he conversed
As with a chosen friend, nor did he leave

Those laureat wreathes ungathered which the
nymphs

Twine on the top of Pindus. Finally
Himself above each lower thought uplifting,
His ears he closed to listen to the song
Which Sion's kings did consecrate of old;
And fixed his Pindus upon Lebanon.
A blessed man! who of protracted days
Made not, as thousands do, a vulgar sleep;
But truly did *he* live his life.—Urbino
Take pride in him! O passenger, farewell!

Trans. by Wordsworth.

SONNET

By Tommaso Campanella.—1639

Wisdom is riches great and great estate,
Far above wealth, nor are the wise unblest
If born of lineage vile or race oppressed:
These by their doom sublime they illustrate.
They have their griefs for guerdon, to dilate
Their name and glory; nay, the cross, the sword
Make them to be like saints or God adored;
And gladness greets them in the frowns of fate;
For joys and sorrows are their dear delight;
Even as a lover takes the weal and woe
Felt for his lady. Such is wisdom's might.
But wealth still vexes fools; more vile they grow
By being noble; and their luckless light
With each new misadventure burns more low.

Trans. by John Addington Symonds.

LINES FROM "ADAM"

A SACRED DRAMA

By G. Battista Andreini.—1578-1652

ST. MICHAEL SPEAKS

"Ye victims cleansed by tears,
Ye martyrs in affliction,
Amidst your blessed pains,
Ye holocausts of life and of content!
Now call the stars no more
Vindictive; war is now
Converted into peace,
And death turned into life.
Hence mortal Adam is made immortal,
And Eve, though dead in many parts revives.
The potent fire of love
In which the tender mercy of God blazes,
Inflames him with pure zeal to save the sinner.
Contend, resist, and bravely
Wage with the hostile Serpent constant war;
It is man's province now
To conquer Hell, and triumph over Death.
Creatures of grace! feel deeply now forever,
That your most gracious Father
Would not direct towards the ground your face,
As he has made the brute, but up to heaven;
So that, forever mindful of their source,
Your happy souls may point towards their home:
For the high realm of heaven
Is as a shining glass, in which of God
The glories ever blaze.

Inure yourselves to water, sun, and winds,
And in the stony caves,
In the most barren deserts
That the sun visits when he blazes most,
There both exert your powers;
There many years and many
United ye shall dwell in hallowed love;
And from your progeny henceforth the world
Exulting shall derive fertility.
And now to you, ye mortal pair, I promise,
As ye together sinned,
If ye in penitence have joined together,
Together e'en in Heaven
In a corporeal veil
Contemplating the sacred face of God
Ye shall enjoy the bliss of Paradise."

ADAM SPEAKS

"Greater than my offence I now acknowledge
Your mercy, O my God!
Since you become the sovereign friend of man."
Trans. by Cowper.

SONNET

By Giovanni Cotta.—1668-1696

"There is no God," the fool in secret said:
"There is no God that rules or earth or sky."
Tear off the band that folds the wretch's head,
That God may burst upon his faithless eye!
Is there no God?—the stars in myriads spread,
If he look up, the blasphemy deny;
Whilst his own features, in the mirror read,
Reflect the image of Divinity.

Is there no God?—the stream that silver flows,
The air he breathes, the ground he treads, the trees,
The flowers, the grass, the sands, each wind that
blows,

All speak of God; throughout one voice agrees,
And eloquent His dread existence shows:
Blind to thyself, ah, see Him, fool, in these!

Trans. by H. S. Van Dyk.

TO ITALY IN 1700

By Vincenzo Filicaja

Italia! O Italia! thou who hast
The fatal gift of beauty, which became
A funeral dower of present woes and past,
On thy sweet brow is sorrow ploughed by shame,
And annals graved in characters of flame.
Oh, God! that thou wert in thy nakedness
Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim
Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press
To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of thy dis-
tress;

Then might'st thou more apal; or, less desired,
Be homely and be peaceful, undeplord
For thy destructive charms; then, still untired,
Would not be seen the armed torrents pour'd
Down the deep Alps; nor would the hostile horde
Of many-nation'd spoilers from the Po
Quaff blood and water; nor the stranger's sword
Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so,
Victor or vanquish'd, thou the slave of friend or
foe.

Trans. by Byron.

SONNET ON THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE

By Vincenzo Filicaja.—1707

Just as a mother, with sweet, pious face,
Yearns towards her little children from her seat,
Gives one a kiss, another an embrace,
Takes this upon her knees, that on her feet;
And while from actions, looks, complaints, pretenses,
She learns their feelings and their various will,
To this a look, to that a word dispenses,
And, whether stern or smiling, loves them still;
—So Providence for us, high, infinite,
Makes our necessities its watchful task,
Hearkens to all our prayers, helps all our wants,
And even if it denies what seems our right,
Either denies because 'twould have us ask,
Or seems but to deny, or in denying grants.

*Trans. by Leigh Hunt.*SONNET ON MICHAEL ANGELO'S PAINTING
OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

By Alessandro Guidi.—1650-1712

"I see the awful judgment day unfold,
Tuscan Apelles, pictured by thy hand,
Where such strong tints of ire and rage expand
That my heart shudders and my blood runs cold.
Down towards the infernal gulf in tumult roll'd
I see the sinful crew; and fear-struck stand;
Check'd in those vain pursuits I once had plann'd.
Whilst timely dread restrains transgression bold.

I see the happier train, who far apart
From danger move and joyful take their place
Amidst the cloudless regions of the blest.
O wondrous effort of the Painter's Art!
Where colors are God's ministers of grace,
That with new ardors fire my glowing breast."
—*Trans. by Thomas Roscoe.*

SONNET

ON MICHAEL ANGELO'S
SCULPTURED FIGURE OF MOSES
IN SAN PIETRO IN VINCOLI

By G. B. Felice Zappi.—1667-1719

"And who is he that shaped in sculptured stone
Sits giant-like? Stern monument of art
Unparallel'd, whilst language seems to start
From his prompt lips, and we his precepts own?
—'Tis Moses; by his beard's thick honors known,
And the twin beams that from his temples dart;
'Tis Moses, seated on the mount apart
Whilst yet the Godhead o'er his features shone.
Such once he look'd when ocean's sounding wave
Suspended hung, and such amidst the storm
When o'er his foes the refluent waters roar'd.
An idol calf his followers did engrave:
But had they raised this awe-commanding form,
Then had they with less guilt their work ador'd.

Trans. by Roscoe.

SONNET

By Faustina Maratti.—1724

Bidden to write by overflowing scorn,
That armed with reason reigned within my breast,
Told to relate the wrong, disgrace confest,
Wrought by vile malice, but of evil born,
I shook me, as aroused by shrillest horn
A fiery steed, unused to spur's distrest.
When lo! another thought brought its behest,
And healed where the opposing thought had torn.
Not to a name debased and deed of ill
Will I give life, but, rather, leave to time
To change the grief that hatred cannot still.
So on the baser herd vengeance sublime
Pours he who can his whole soul's being fill
With pride that scorns to heed detracting slime.

*Trans. by Florence Trail.*SONNET TO A FORMER SWEETHEART OF
HER HUSBAND'S

By Faustina Maratti

"Lady, that once so charm'd my life's fair Sun,
That of thy beauties still he talketh oft,—
Thy mouth, fair hair, and words discreet and soft.
Speak! when thou look'dst, was he from silence won?
Or, did he turn those sweet and troubled eyes
On thee, and gaze as now on me he gazeth?
(For ah! I know *thy* love was then the prize,
And then he *felt* the grace that still he praⁱseth.)

But why dost thou those beaming glances turn
Thus downwards? Ah! I see (against thy will)
All o'er thy cheek the crimsoning blushes burn.
Speak out! oh answer me!—yet, no, no, stay!
Be dumb, be silent, if thou need'st must say
That he who once adored thee, loves thee still.”
Trans. in Mrs. Jameson's "Loves of the Poets."

SONNET

By Cardinal Cornelio Bentivoglio.—1668-1732

The sainted spirit, which from bliss on high
Descends like dayspring to my favored sight,
Shines in such noontide radiance of the sky,
Scarce do I know that form intensely bright!
But with the sweetness of her well-known smile,
—That smile of peace!—she bids my doubts depart,
And takes my hand, and softly speaks the while,
And heaven's full glory pictures to my heart.
Beams of that heaven in her my eyes behold,
And now, e'en now, in thought my wings unfold
To soar with her and mingle with the blest:
But, ah! so swift her buoyant pinion flies,
That I, in vain aspiring to the skies,
Fall to my native sphere, by earthly bonds
depressed.

Trans. by Felicia Hemans.

SONNET

By Teresa Zani.—1683-1752

Four lustrums now have passed, loosed from all
ties,
My parents in their graves are lost to me,
I may at my sweet will, foolish or wise,
Entreat for pardon, or urge pity's plea.
Snared am I, and my joy I'll not disguise:
For he's a youth of modest mien and free,
And Heav'n I know will not my vow despise
To give myself to him whose spouse I'll be.
Will envy sneer? Forebears of worth like mine
He may not boast; yet by desert he's born
To number glorious sires in a long line:
Sacred his genius is, his acts adorn
Him, quaffing draughts of Helicon divine.
It pleases me that he to me will turn.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

IN PRAISE OF SAN GIROLAMO MIANI

FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF THE

SOMASCHI

By Giuseppe Parini.—1729-1799

O Poverty, that from their native place
Makest the grieving crowds to wander far,
'Thro' scorn and hate of thee men would debar
Their fellows from their bread and make them base;
When to Miani's thou shalt bring thy face,

No door will close, no creature harm or scare,
Tho' strange and old the guise thy garments wear,
And tho' thy speech be void of ev'ry grace:
But with a ready succor for thy need
His poor and simple fare he'll offer thee
And for a share in all thy want will plead:
Since all men with an equal love this soul
Embraces in its grand immensity,
And would as fellow-citizens enroll.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

TO GOD: A SONNET

By Giuseppe Parini.—1729-1799

The pow'r Thou gav'st, O God, unto the sun
That to itself the planets it can draw;
Yet they to move thro' space have their own law,
But not to turn, to make their forces one:
Whence 'tis around that orb they restless run.
And far from it must fall if but a flaw
Be in that sun and make its strength withdraw,
Or if their motion stops must be undone.
O Thou Eternal Sun, father to man,
Thy grace I feel, whereby I turn to Thee,
And also feel the bait that mars Thy plan.
Ah, when my soul and body loosed must be,
May I not fall with sinners 'neath Thy ban,
But wrap me in Thy light eternally.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

IN PRAISE OF SLEEP

By Gian Carlo Passeroni.—1713-1803

“How many things have oft been sung or said
Concerning Sleep in poetry and prose!—
There’s scarce an author worthy to be read
But something on the subject can disclose;
While some declare it good, with nodding head,
Others its torpid influence oppose;—
And thus its good or evil each enhances,
As it may chance to suit their different fancies.

He who extols its worth, we always find
Loves frequent naps and after dinner snoozes;
But he who is not drowsily inclined,
Old Morpheus, for the vilest god abuses;
As one who tow’rds the ladye of his mind
The honey’d terms of admiration uses,—
Yet those who do not care a farthing for her
Despise her charms, or mention her with horror.

By some, in terms of glowing praise addrest,
As rest to wearied mortals sent from heavn’n—
Of all its gracious gifts esteem’d the best—
A brief oblivion to our sorrows given!
Others deny its virtues, and protest
Somnus from earth has every virtue driven:
One calls him son of Erebus,—another
Swears he is nothing better than Death’s brother.

Some say it keeps us healthy, and again,
For sickness 'tis a soothing remedy;
Others declare it stagnates every vein,
Making us, like the blood, creep lazily.
All this may be, or not, but I maintain,
When I am snoring, that I feel quite free
From trouble or annoyance; and I hate
A blockhead who disturbs that tranquil state.

Sleep can at least a truce to sorrow bring,
Altho' it may not *conquer* miseries,
For o'er our couch he spreads his dusky wing,
And grief before its mighty power flies;
And, as I somewhere heard a poet sing,
'Beggars and kings sleep soon can equalize';
So, when asleep, perchance I am as good
As any lord or prince of royal blood!

Nay, I am happier still, for I must own
My sleep is not disturb'd by constant fear
That others may attack my wife or throne,
Or that the threat'ning Sultan marches near;
I am not roused by the shrill trumpet's tone—
—Indeed, *no* startling sound disturbs my ear,
Unless it be the neighb'ring abbey's chime,
With noisy zeal proclaiming matin time.

And if in visions phantom shades arise,
Invoking midnight terrors—what of them?
How oft on soaring wings we range the skies—
At banquets sit—or find some costly gem—
Discover where a hoarded treasure lies—
Or wear a monarch's jewell'd diadem!
For many such adventures we may meet,
Raised by sleep's magic wand, with kind deceit.

Moreover, I am wedded to no mate,
Thinking my holy slumber she might break;
I am no doctor—thief—or advocate—
For they must ever keep both eyes awake.
Oh! when I take a hearty supper, late,
How sweetly sleep creeps o'er me! I betake
My wearied limbs to bed; and, when once there,
Why the dog barks, I neither know nor care!"

Translator Unknown.

A SATIRE: THE LOVE OF MONEY

By Vittorio Alfieri.—1749-1803

Yes, glutton of the land and sea,
Our pursy age's deity,
I'll dirt my pen a while with thee.

For since this gloating in a purse
Which blinds mankind grows worse and worse,
'Tis fit I smite thee with a verse.

Half-freedom's child, I know thou art:
I'll prove thee father, e'er we part,
Of twofold slavery and no heart.

Lo, dry-drawn Europe sends her brood
Of traders out, like a new flood,
To sow the earth with tears and blood.

Whether a land's at war or peace,
Produces metals, tops or teas,
Or lives in towns or villages,

This vermin, mightiest thing alive,
Makes them all herd, and crowd, and drive,
To fatten up its hungry hive.

Unjust and stupid, we despise
The Jew that buys, and sells, and buys,
As if we acted otherwise!

Nay, we do worse; for not content,
Like other thieves, with a home rent,
We rob on every Continent.

I pass the Americans that bled
For Spain's fierce thirst, and English bread
Torn from the slaves it should have fed.

Were I to track through all his woes
The monster to his swaddling clothes,
Where I should end, God only knows.

Enough for me if I can tear
The mask off now and show the care
Hag Europe takes to be thought fair.

How should we crown her, having trod
Whole nations down for this her god?
With laurel? No—with salted cod.

Trans. by Leigh Hunt.

FROM THE AGAMEMNON
OF VITTORIO ALFIERI.—1749-1803

Soliloquy of Clytemnestra.

It is the hour; and sunk in slumber now
Lies Agamemnon. Shall he nevermore
Open his eyes to the fair light? My hand,
Once pledge to him of stainless love and faith,
Is it to be the minister of his death?
Did I swear that? Ay, that; and I must keep
My oath. Quick, let me go! My foot, heart, hand—
All over I tremble. Oh, what did I promise?
Wretch! what do I attempt? How all my courage
Hath vanished from me since AEgisthus vanished!
I only see the immense atrocity
Of this, my horrible deed; I only see
The bloody specter of Atrides! Ah,
In vain do I accuse thee! No, thou lovest
Cassandra not. Me, only me, thou lovest,
Unworthy of thy love.

Trans. by W. D. Howells.

SONNET ON HIMSELF

By Ugo Foscolo.—1778-1827

A furrowed brow, with cavernous eyes aglow;
Hair tawny; hollow cheeks; looks resolute;
Lips pouting, but to smiles and pleasance slow;
Head bowed, neck beautiful, and breast hirsute;
Limbs shapely, simple, yet elect, in dress;
Rapid my steps, my thoughts, my act, my tones;
Grave, humane, stubborn, prodigal to excess;
To the world adverse, fortune me disowns.

Shame makes me vile, and anger makes me brave,
Reason in me is cautious, but my heart
Doth, rich in vices and in virtues, rave;
Sad for the most, and oft alone, apart;
Incredulous alike of hope and fear,
Death shall bring rest and honor to my bier.

Trans. by W. D. Howells.

LOUIS XVI'S ASCENT TO HEAVEN

From "The Bassvilliana" of Vincenzo Monti
1754-1828

As when the sun uprears himself among
The lesser dazzling substances, and drives
His eager steeds along the fervid curve,—

When in one hue is painted all
The heavenly vault, and every other star
Is touched with pallor and doth veil its front,

So with sidereal splendor all aflame
Amid a thousand glad souls following,
High into heaven arose that beauteous soul.

Smiled as he passed them, the majestical,
Tremulous daughters of the light, and shook
Their glowing and dewy tresses as they moved.

He among all with longing and with love
Beaming, ascended until he was come
Before the triune uncreated life.

There his flight ceases, there the heart, become
Aim of the threefold gaze divine, is stilled,
And all the urgency of desire is lost;

There on his temples he receives the crown
Of living amaranth immortal, on
His cheek the kiss of everlasting peace.

And then were heard consonances and notes
Of an ineffable sweetness, and the orbs
Began again to move their starry wheels.

More swiftly yet the steeds that bore the day
Exulting flew, and with their mighty tread,
Did beat the circuit of their airy way.

Trans. by William Dean Howells.

FROM "THE FOUR PORTIONS OF THE DAY"

By Ippolito Pindemonti.—1753-1828

Oh, then, thus softly to the silent bed
Of the dark tomb let me at length descend;
Where the bleak path which now on earth I tread,
So dear and yet so sad, shall have an end.
Day shall return; but this unconscious head
Shall never from its pillow damp ascend,
Nor on the fields and all their tenants gaze;
Nor watch the setting sun's sweet parting rays.

Perchance, across these pleasant hills, one day
In search of me some much-loved friend will come,
And asking for me, as he takes his way,
Some peasant boy will lead him to my tomb;

My tomb,—this nameless stone—where oft I stray,
And rest my weary limbs as 'twere my home,
And sit unmoved and sad, or to the breeze
Pour all my soul's poetic ecstasies.

And these dark groves, which o'er me gently sigh,
In death above my peaceful grave shall nod,
And the tall grass, so welcome to my eye,
Over my head shall deck the verdant sod.
"O happy thou"! my friend perchance shall cry,
"The calm and lonely path which thou hast trod
Hath led thy footsteps to a holier state,
And half deceived the stern decrees of Fate."

Trans. by Thomas Roscoe.

LINES FOR A SONG. "SEE THE PALE MOON"

By Jacopo Vittorelli.—1749-1835

Ah! 'tis the fair moon's glimmer,
See how the silv'ry shimmer
Floats to the regions dimmer
Where the pale starlight may shine.

Low the sad turtle sigheth,
Through the green thicket flyeth,
And as his soft song dieth,
Wafts he my faith to thee.

Look thee, look thee!
Ah, 'tis the fair moon's glimmer.
Look thee, look thee
Where the pale starlight may shine.

Trans. by M. L. L.

SATURDAY IN THE VILLAGE

By Giacomo Leopardi.—1798-1837

The maiden comes from the field,
At the setting of the sun,
With her bundle of herbs; and brings in her hand
A bouquet of roses and violets,
With which, as she is wont
She intends to adorn
Her bosom and hair tomorrow, on the day of
"festa."
The old woman sits with her neighbors
On the steps to spin
Opposite to where the day is dying;
And goes on talking of her good time
When on festa days she adorned herself
And, still strong and graceful,
Would dance in the evening among those
That were the companions of her happy days.
Now all the air grows dark,
The atmosphere turns blue and the shadows
Descend from hills and roof
In the whitening light of the moon.
Now the Church bell tells
Of the festa drawing near;
And at this sound you would say
That the heart again takes comfort.
The children shouting
In the poor little square in haste,
And leaping here and there,
Give forth a joyful sound;
And meanwhile the digger, whistling,
Returns to his sparse table
And thinks within himself of the day of his repose.

Then when is extinguished every other light
And everything else is silent,
You hear the hammer beating, you hear
The saw of the carpenter, who keeps vigil
In the close shop by the lamp,
And hurries and agonizes
To finish the work before the coming of the dawn.
This of the seven is the most pleasing day,
Full of hope and of joy:
Tomorrow the hours will bring
Sadness and care, and to the accustomed work
Everyone in his thought will return.
Dear rollicking boy,
Thy blooming age
Is like a day full of happiness,
A day clear, and serene,
Which forestalls the festa of thy life.
Rejoice, my child; a pleasing state,
A joyful season is this.
I will not say more; but may thy festa
Howe'er slow in coming, not bring grief to thee.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

A DIALOGUE WITH A MUMMY

By Giacomo Leopardi.—1798-1837

Chorus of Mummies in the Laboratory of

Frederick K. Ruysch

O Death! alone immortal, unto whom
Every created thing must come, in thee
Our disembodied natures now repose;
Joyless, indeed, but, at the least, secure
From all the woes of life. Profoundest night
Obscures our torpid and bewildered sense;

All hope and all desire in us are dead;
But so alike is every grief and fear;
While the void aeons, gliding slowly by,
Have neither tedium nor charm for us.
We once did live; but now the memory
Of life is paled within us, faint and blurred
As a child's waking image of some dream,
Or terrifying phantom of the night.
What were we—what was that unjoyful state
Which, living, we called life—ay, what?
It looms upon our apprehension now
Like some dim problem of mysterious scope,
Even as Death unto the living looms;
And even as man's puny senses shrink
From death while yet he lives, just even so
Our disembodied spirits now recoil
From the bare thought of life's brief fevered
course;
Joyless, indeed, but now at least assured
Joy is denied alike to quick and dead.

Trans. by Major-General Patrick Maxwell.

SONNET IN THE GENOESE DIALECT

LOVE IN DESPAIR

By Paolo Foglietta

If this be the snow which is sent from above
As its whiteness would seem to proclaim,
Then why has it power to send such a flame
As scorches my soul into love?

If this be a statue on pedestalled feet
As its coldness would make me believe,

Then how can it walk if no daughter of Eve,
And stab at my heart when we meet?

But if 'tis a woman of earth's common clay—
And it is, I am fully persuaded—
There's nothing more sweet in Dame Nature's
display,
Beside her the Goddess of Beauty seems faded,
(Her face sweeter still would appear, by the way,
Did a cold stony stare not pervade it!)

Trans. by Robert W. Carden.

TRUST IN GOD

THE STATUE OF L. BARTOLINI

Sonnet by Giuseppe Giusti.—1809-1850

As if forgetful of this mortal coil,
On Him who pardons fixed is all her gaze,
Upon her knees in posture of high praise
She doth herself of pride and strength despoil.
A weary grief, a calm naught can embroil
Throughout her form abandonment conveys.
But in her brow we see where she doth raise
Her mind to God and banish thought of toil:
It seems she says: if everything held dear
Deceives me and the days I hoped serene
Must from my saddened life all disappear,
Lord, trusting, not in things I've known and seen,
To Thy paternal love, casting out fear,
I flee, and find affection not terrene.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

TO GIOVAN BATTISTA VICO

By Giuseppe Giusti

In thy book of social progress and its rules
Is shrined a deep and philosophic seed,
Whose patient culture patient souls will feed
And fructify in new and healthier schools.
The mind enamored of such means, such tools,
Revealing strong foundations for its creed,
Order that can from God alone proceed,
Can soar where ignorance no more befools.
Power fills me and I hereby break the knot
That in my fallen soul makes me a slave,
Approach an ocean where time is forgot:
And with the Center I my mind engrave,
I clasp the universe and falter not,
Renewed, restored, exalted and made brave.

*Trans. by Florence Trail.*INSTRUCTIONS TO A YOUNG ASPIRANT
FOR OFFICE

By Giuseppe Guisti.—1809-1850

That you must cut all liberals whatever,
All men of genius, all the "dangerous" crew,
Not prate of books or papers, but endeavor
To prove that they are all High Dutch to you;
That you must bolt your heart, and hold your
tongue,
You've known, yourself, I'm well aware, for long.
Now, first and foremost, learn to bend your back!—
Be Veneration's self personified.
Dress ill; your clothes should fit you like a sack,

The cowl does made the monk in such a case,
And the wall's valued by its plaster face.

Get introduced, and every blessed night
Visit some lout they've made a minister.
There choose your time, and change your stops
aright,
According as his tastes or whims prefer.
And if tomfoolery's the thing for winning,
Play the tomfool, and set the folks a-grinning.

Keep him supplied with news, and ferret out
Fresh scandal, gossip, all that folks will tell you;
And, so to speak, what the whole town's about,
Down from His Highness even to Stenterello.

Say there arise a scandal, a dispute,
A hurly-burly in your patron's house,—
*"Know-naught knew much, who knew when to be
mute,"*

Says the old saw. Be mute, then, as a mouse!
Great men will sometimes act like fools, 'tis certain,
In their own homes. Be ours to—drop the curtain!

Jump at all hints. Keep begging every way.
Take all they give you, so they let you serve;
But—beg! *"The toad refused to beg"*, they say,
"And therefore got no tail." Besides, observe
That if not propped and fostered by our need,
Great men's authority's a dream indeed.

Remember to ignore and over pass
Each rude rebuff, each peevish look and tone,
And, like Pope Sixtus, write yourself an ass
If you're resolved to reach *your* papal throne.

After the bitters sweets will come at length,
And sturdy begging beat close-fisted strength.
With profit Gingillino did attend
To the sage preaching of his vulpine friend.
He went; he knuckled down; he bared his crown;
He crept, crawled, coaxed, and cringed to sword
and gown;
And when they'd dried him, tried him, sifted him,
drifted him,
From Dan to Beersheba, at last they lifted him—
When the whole process they'd gone through and
through,
With rites baptismal and with chrismal too—
Their heaven of three-piled roguedom to ascend,
Took him within the fold—and that's his end!

Trans. by A. Werner.

SONNET

By Luigi Carrer.—1801-1850

I am a pilgrim swallow, and I roam
Beyond strange seas, of other lands in quest,
Leaving the well-known lake and hills of home
And that dear roof where late I hung my nest;
All things beloved and love's eternal woes
I fly, an exile from my native shore;
I cross the cliffs and woods, but with me goes
The care I thought to abandon evermore.
Along the banks of streams unknown to me,
I pipe the elms and willows pensive lays,
And call on her whom I despair to see,
And pass in banishment and tears my days.
Breathe, air of spring, for which I pine and yearn,
That to his nest the swallow may return!

Trans. by W. D. Howells.

SONGS FROM THE SICILIAN

I

Clarida, with a haughty grace,
In scornful humor sets her face,
And looks as she were born alone,
To give, in love, and take from none.

Though I adore, to that degree,
Clarida, I would die for thee,
If you're too proud to ease my pain,
I am too proud for your disdain.

II

I know her false, I know her base,
I know that gold alone can move her;
I know she jilts me to my face,
And yet, ye gods! I know I love her.

I see, too plain, and yet am blind,
Would think her true, while she, forsooth,
To me, and to my rival, kind,
Courts him, courts me, and jilts us both.
Trans. in "The Port Folio," March, 1812.

THE SWALLOW

By Tommaso Grossi.—1853

"Swallow from beyond the sea!
That, with every dawning day,
Sitting on the balcony,
Utterest that plaintive lay,

What is this thou tellest me,
Swallow from beyond the sea!

Haply thou for him who went
From thee and forgot his mate
Dost lament to my lament,
Widowed, lonely, desolate.
Even then lament with me,
Swallow from beyond the sea!

Happier yet art thou than I,
Thee thy trusty wings may bear
Over lake and cliff to fly,
Filling with thy cries the air,
Calling him continually,
Swallow from beyond the sea!

Could I too!—but I must pine,
In this dungeon close and low,
Where the sun can never shine,
Where the breeze can never blow,
Whence my voice scarce reaches thee,
Swallow from beyond the sea!

Now September days are near,
Thou to distant lands will fly,
In another hemisphere
Other streams shall hear thy cry,
Other hills shall answer thee,
Swallow from beyond the sea!

Then shall I when daylight glows,
Waking to the sense of pain,
Midst the wintry frosts and snows,
Think I hear thy notes again—

Notes that seem to grieve for me,
Swallow from beyond the sea!

Planted here upon the ground
Thou shalt find a cross in Spring;
There, as evening gathers round,
Swallow, come and rest thy wing;
Chant a strain of peace to me,
Swallow from beyond the sea!

Trans. by William Cullen Bryant.

CANZONE WRITTEN IN PRISON

By Silvio Pellico.—1789-1854

The love of song what can impart
To the lone captive's sinking heart?
Thou Sun! thou fount divine
Of light! the gift is thine!

O, how, beyond the gloom
That wraps my living tomb,
Through forest, garden, mead, and grove,
All nature drinks the ray
Of glorious day,—
Inebriate with love!

The jocund torrents flow
To distant worlds that owe
Their life to thee!
And if a slender ray
Chance through my bars to stray,
And pierce to me,
My cell, no more a tomb,
Smiles in its caverned gloom,—
As nature to the free!

If scarce thy bounty yields
To these ungenial fields
The gift divine,
O, shed thy blessings here,
Now while in dungeon drear
Italians pine!

Thy splendors faintly known,
Sclavonia may not own.
For thee the love
Our hearts must move,
Who from our cradle learn
To adore thee, and to yearn
With passionate desire
(Our nature's fondest prayer,
Needful as vital air)
To see thee, or expire.
Beneath my native, distant sky,
The captive's sire and mother sigh;
O, never there may darkling cloud
With veil of circling horror shroud
The rising day;
By thy warm beams, still glowing bright,
Enchant their hearts with joyous light,
And charm their grief away!

Translated in the Knickerbocker Magazine.

MARTIAL HYMN

By Gabriele Rossetti.—1783-1854

I

The threatening archangel of war
Is already stalking thro' the realms of Italy;
There precedes him the war trumpet,
Which has awakened Italy from sleep;

The Appenine resounds all along,
And the echo goes from the Liris to the Po.

All Italy seems as though it were
A tumultuous sea;
An echo goes thundering
Through country and through town:
We swear, we swear on the sword,
Either Death or Liberty.

II

Where Sicily, which awakes itself to wrath,
Has uttered a cry of lowering tempest,
The three points of the Delta have made echo,
Through three valleys that echo has bellowed;
AEtna has thundered from its hollow cavern,
Scylla has barked, Charybdis has roared.

"To arms, to arms"! is the cry,
Which runs from shore to shore;
And Echo from shore to shore
Doubling that cry proceeds,
We swear, we swear on the sword,
Either Death or Liberty.

V

"We are brothers", resounds from the centre;
"We are brothers", from the sides resounds;
And now these embrace with those,
Delighting to respond from three points,
"We are brothers, brothers, brothers,
And the bounds of separation wholly disappear.

Courage, brothers, now has arrived
The juncture much sighed for;
Should it slip by, ah, who knows when
It will return afresh?

We swear, we swear on the sword,
Liberty or Death.

X

Divine Fountain of more holy rites,
Who dost change that impious power by chastisement,

Thou that dost inspire an enterprise so noble,
Shield and Sword of Italy art Thou;
Safe shield of just defence,
Strong sword of patriotic valor,
Give ear to a Mother oppressed,
Behold her sons all around her,
Who out of indignation and compassion
Cry aloud, shouting,

"We swear, we swear on the sword,
Liberty or Death."

Trans. by Rev. Charles Girdlestone.

FROM THE DIDACTIC POEM, THE HEAVENS
TO MARY SOMERVILLE

By Caterina Bon Brenzoni.—1813-1856

Ah, Lady, on the day that I first saw thee,
Didst thou discover on my face the signs
Of inward agitations? Hast thou seen
How trepidly I then did meet thy gaze,
How by my reverence and my wonder
Were held suspended on th' indocile lip
My trembling words? Ah, say, didst thou perceive
How they were conquered by affection when
I heard thee speak in tones so soft and sweet,
With that angelic voice and humble mien
Which wisdom teaches to her best lov'd?
This, said I to myself, yes, this is she

Of whom a thousand times I've heard the name
Resound with veneration far and wide?
'Tis she who follows in etherial space
The journey of the stars, and still can tell
Of each, weight, motion, distance, orbit, light?
Who knew how to depict with wondrous skill
That admirable nexus, whereby joined
Are all the sciences, which to our thought
Reveal the harmonies of worlds with worlds,
Whose sparkling from within in such sweet guise
The glory made of Him who moveth all?
And to th' incomparable words she joined
The voice that only from the heart proceeds,
Humble and conscious of the Infinite,
The Cause whereon depends the universe?
Oh, this I wished to say, to tell thee much
Of both my heart and mind, but silence reigned
And curb'd th' excited tumult of my soul.
Now that thou art afar I will forget
At least a moment what thou hast attained;
I wish that only shines within my thought
That intimate, mild ray that marks full well
The spirit's peace, and o'er thy countenance
Doth spread a calm conceded those alone
Whose mind is granted by benignant fate
To find its rest in truth immutable.

* * * * *

Sometimes I cried: then, Lord, thou hast denied
That my desires should e'er be satisfied,
My longings to perceive thy mysteries?
The ample volumes of those unknown things
Are opened to the sight of some on earth!
Among those few, O Lord, grant me a place;
O may alleviated be my thirst!

* * * * *

Those shining vaults
Are not for me, as once of old they were,
Mere looks of love, they an Infinity
Incomprehensible bespeak; I too
Would wish to search therein, to spring aloft
T'inebriate me in the works of God.

* * * * *

The flaming rain
Of falling stars I have interpreted
On days foretold, and have described the star
Circled with double ring, a shining veil
In space's ocean, and the rapid whirl
And varied gyre of the eight moons which dance
Around it, and in joyful turn have viewed
Double and triple stars concordant step
Keeping with these, such colors showing forth
As tint the rainbow; and in flight secure
I seemed in pathways of the firmament,
Celestial pilgrim, to keep pace with thee!
But when the sweet dream proved but yet a dream,
Nor was appeased my strong and firm desire,
T' accompany the trace of thy great thoughts,
Upon the pages where thou hast diffused
So great light o'er the secrets of the truth
And to perceive its ray was my glad lot.
The heart has wings; thou took'st me by the hand:
This longing that consumes my ardent soul,
The love of knowledge drawing with its chain
Will lift me for the flight thou dost pursue.
Thy language speaks to me! O ravishment
That thought of ours can scale the infinite,
What ecstasy of heart can thus be felt!
A sight celestial that thyself shalt see!

Shalt see my soul reflecting heartily
That int'mate joy which now and once again
Irradiates our consciousness of truth,
And is a pledge to us of what is rained
In bosoms of Immortals evermore
By splendor of the Uncreated Light.

Etc.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

FROM THE DRAMA "NABUCCO"

By Giovanni Niccolini.—1782-1861

HARANGUE OF ARSACES

O, direst lot of slaves!
Slavery, to him who has lived free, is shame.
But why my wounds reopen? I address not
The citizen, t'is to the king I speak.
To thee Assyria has given her crimes,
Her valor, virtue, rights, and fortune. Rich
Art thou through ancient ills, rich in her wealth.
The harvest of the past, the future's hopes,
Are placed in thee
The urn of fate God to thy powerful hand
Committed, and forsook the earth. But was't
Guerdon or punishment? Heavens! Dar'st thou
 stake
The world's last hope on doubtful battle? now,
When in the tired Assyrian courage flags,
And fair pretexts are wanting, other sons,
Demand of mothers, wrapt in mourning weeds,
With tear-dimmed eyes? For what should we now
 battle?
Cold are our altars or o'erthrown, the gods
Uncertain; slain or prisoners our sons;

Not e'en their graves are given to our affliction;
The Scythian snows conceal our brave Assyrians;
And our ancestral monuments are buried
Beneath the ruins of our temples. Say,
What should the Syrian now defend?

Translated in "For. Quar. Rev."

TO GARIBALDI AFTER ASPROMONTE

By Francesco Dall' Ongaro.—1862

Fly, O my songs, to Varignano, fly!
Like some lost flock of swallows homeward flying,
And hail me Rome's Dictator, who there doth lie
Broken with wounds, but conquered not, nor dying;
Bid him think on the April that is nigh,
Month of the flowers and ventures fear-defying.

Or if it is not nigh, it soon shall come,
As shall the swallow to his last year's home,
As on its naked stem the rose shall burn,
As to the empty sky the stars return,
As hope comes back to hearts crushed by regret;—
Nay, say not this to his heart, ne'er crushed yet!

Trans. by W. D. Howells.

CASTA DIVA

HEATHEN SONG IN BELLINI'S OPERA,

"NORMA"

Words by Romani.—1785-1865

Virgin goddess, smiling brightly,
Where the pale moon glimmers nightly,
Now unveiled in cloudless beauty
Hallow thou our votive duty,
Be propitious to our call.

May thy radiance falling mildly
Calm these bosoms raging wildly,
May thy presence felt divinely
Peace on earth diffuse benignly,
As in heaven it blesseth all.

Trans. by Joseph Reese Fry.

THE DUET, "GIA MI PASCO"
FROM BELLINI'S OPERA, NORMA

By Felice Romani

(Norma)

Yes, e'en now thy looks repay me.
At her death what grief is thine!
Yes, I'll make at last thy misery
Surpass the force of mine.

(Pollione)

Ah, rejoice then in my terror,
See me weeping at thy feet,
Round me let thy fury gather;
Save her innocence such fate.

Trans. by Henry Edward Sutton.

CAVATINA IN BELLINI'S "NORMA"

Words by Felice Romani

Ah! were my love requited,
As when 'twas early plighted,
Against the world united
Belov'd thy shield I'd be.
O yes, this fond heart, burning,
Would welcome thee returning,
And all else earthly spurning,
Its heaven would find in thee.

Ah! one bland look endearing,
One accent kindly cheering
All thought of wrong would banish
And soothe my memory's pain.
Then come, my spirit lonely
Still panteth for thee only,
Still in thy true affection
Its life would find again.

Trans. by Joseph Reese Fry.

SERENADE

IN THE OPERA, "DON PASQUALE"

BY DONIZETTI

Words by Felice Romani

O summer night, so softly bright,
How sweet the bower where sleeps thy cradled
flower.

The light gale hies to rock her bed
And scatter dew around her head.
Then o'er her flying it whispers sighing,
Sleep on till morning light,
Sweet flower, good-night.

No spoiler shall come near thee, lullaby;
No blight shall dare to sere thee, lullaby;
The bud reposes, her veil she closes.
The gale sighs round with softer sound.
Thy beauty's spell will charm thee.
No stormy winds shall harm thee.
Sweet flower, good night till morning light,
Sweet flower, sweet flower, good-night.

Translator Unknown.

THE FIFTH OF MAY
AN ODE ON THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON

By Alessandro Manzoni.—1873

He was.—As motionless as lay,
First mingled with the dead,
The relics of the senseless clay,
Whence such a soul had fled,—
The Earth astounded holds her breath,
Struck with the tidings of his death:
She pauses the last hour to see
Of the dread Man of Destiny;
Nor knows she when another tread,
Like that of the once mighty dead
Shall such a footprint leave impressed
As his, in blood, upon her breast.

I saw him blazing on his throne,
Yet hailed him not: by restless fate
Hurled from the giddy summit down;
Resume again his lofty state:
Saw him at last forever fall,
Still mute amid the shouts of all:
Free from base flattery when he rose;
From baser outrage when he fell:
Now his career has reached its close
My voice is raised the truth to tell,
And o'er his exiled urn will try
To pour a strain that shall not die.

From Alps to Pyramids were thrown
His bolts, from Scylla to the Don,
From Manzanares to the Rhine,
From sea to sea, unerring hurled;

And ere the flash had ceased to shine,
Burst on their aim,—and shook the world.
Was this true glory?—The high doom
Must be pronounced by times to come:
For us, we bow before His throne
Who willed, in gifting mortal clay
With such a spirit, to display
A grander impress of his own.

His was the stormy, fierce delight
To dare adventure's boldest scheme;
The soul of fire, that burned for might,
And could of naught but empire dream;
And his the indomitable will
That dream of empire to fulfill,
And to a greatness to attain
'Twere madness to have hoped to gain:
All these were his; nor these alone;—
Flight, victory, exile, and the throne;—
Twice in the dust by thousands trod,
Twice on the altar as a god.

Two ages stood in arms arrayed,
Contending which should victor be:
He spake:—his mandate they obeyed,
And bowed to hear their destiny.
He stepped between them, to assume
The mastery, and pronounce their doom;
Then vanished, and inactive wore
Life's remnant out on that lone shore.
What envy did his palmy state,
What pity his reverses move,
Object of unrelenting hate
And unextinguishable love!

As beat innumerable waves
O'er the last floating plank that saves
One sailor from the wreck, whose eye
Intently gazes o'er the main
Far in the distance to descry
Some speck of hope,—but all in vain;
Did countless waves of memory roll
Incessant, thronging on his soul;
Recording, for a future age,
The tale of his renown,
How often on the immortal page
His hand sank weary down!

Oft on some sea-beat cliff alone
He stood,—the lingering daylight gone,
And pensive evening come at last—
With folded arms and eyes declined;
While, O, what visions on his mind
Came rushing—of the past!
The rampart stormed,—the tented field,—
His eagles glittering far and wide,—
His columns never taught to yield,—
His cavalry's resistless tide,
Watching each motion of his hand,
Swift to obey the swift command.

Such thoughts, perchance, last filled his breast,
And his departing soul oppressed,
To tempt it to despair;
Till from on high a hand of might
In mercy came to guide its flight
Up to a purer air,—
Leading it, o'er hope's path of flowers
To the celestial plains,

Where greater happiness is ours
Than even fancy feigns.
And where earth's fleeting glories fade
Into the shadow of a shade.

Immortal, bright, beneficent,
Faith, used to victories, on thy roll
Write this with joy; for never bent
Beneath death's hand a haughtier soul;
Thou from the worn and pallid clay
Chase every bitter word away
That would insult the dead:
His holy crucifix, whose breath
Has power to raise and to depress,
Send consolation and distress,
Lay by him on that lowly bed
And hallowed it in death.

Trans. by F. C. Gray.

LINES FROM "PRIMAL HISTORIES"

THE DREAM OF A NEW WORLD

By Aleardo Aleardi.—1812-1878

I

But between that and our shore roared diffuse
Abysmal seas and fabulous hurricanes,
Which, thought on, blanched the faces of the bold;
For the dread secret of the heavens was then
The Western world. Yet on the Italian coasts
A boy grew into manhood, in whose soul
The instinct of the unknown continent burned.
He saw in his prophetic mind depicted
The opposite visage of the earth, and, turning
With joyful defiance to the ocean, sailed

Forth with two secret pilots, God and Genius.
Last of the prophets, he returned in chains
And glory.

II

THE POET'S OWN DESTINY

Muse of an aged people, in the eve
Of fading civilization, I was born
Of kindred that have greatly expiated
And greatly wept. For me the ambrosial fingers
Of Graces never wove the laurel crown,
But the fates shadowed, from my youngest days,
My brow with passion-flowers, and I have lived
Unknown to my dear land. Oh, fortunate
My sisters that in the heroic dawn
Of races sung! To them did destiny give
The virgin fire and chaste ingenuousness
Of their land's speech; to me, the senile rage;
To me, the painted fancies clothed by art
Degenerate; to me, the desperate wish
Not in my soul to nurse ungenerous dreams,
But to contend, and with the sword of song
To fight my battles too.

Trans. by W. D. Howells.

FRIENDSHIP

By Giuseppe Garibaldi.—1807-1882

Friendship, pervading spirit of the blest,
Sublimest bounty of the Infinite,
Imperishable as the Alpine height
That stands secure in everlasting rest:

And what were we, if thou wert unpossess
Midst all the adversities that do us spite?
What but thy power can shelter the oppress
And lift this sunken people to the light?

All pass the Styx—love, pride, ambition's dream,
And human greatness flies, a fugitive,
To vanish, cloud-like, in the Lethic stream;
Thou, emanate from God, alone dost live
The life of the immortal, and supreme
The holy comfort which is thine to give.

Trans. by Evelyn Martinengo Cesaresco.

GARIBALDI'S APOLOGY TO VICTOR HUGO

For Accepting Victor Emanuel and Dethroning

Bomba

To spare the Italy we loved this strain
Of the old agony borne all again,
We drove the Bourbon out and took that other,—
Dethroned a corpse and set up its sick brother.

* * * * *

LOUIS NAPOLEON

Warned off from Mexico—foiled at Berlin—
He slew my lads—my Roman boys! "to win
Prestige." He won it. Ah! good Friend! thy verse
Thunders the judgment of a righteous curse
On those soiled laurel leaves. But let him be.
He does the things he must! Wait thou and see!
A little while his shameless scheme prevails,
A little while, and God's long-suffering fails.
And when he ends, and we may pity him,
The dawn will break on Europe dead and dim;

The dawn of brotherhood, and love, and peace,
The light of a new time, when there shall cease
This clang of armies over Christian lands;
And nations, tearing off their Lazarus bands,
Shall rise,—see face to face,—and sadly say,
Why were we foes? why did we serve—and slay?
Trans. by an Oxford Graduate.

POPULAR SONGS OF TUSCANY

I

“Sleeping or waking, thou sweet face,
Lift up thy fair and tender brow:
List to thy love in this still place;
He calls thee to thy window now:
But bids thee not the house to quit,
Since in the night this were not meet.
Come to thy window, stay within;
I stand without and sing and sing;
Come to thy window, stay at home;
I stand without and make my moan.

II

I come to visit thee, my beauteous queen,
Thee and the house where thou art harboured:
All the long way upon my knees, my queen,
I kiss the earth where'er thy footsteps tread.
I kiss the earth, and gaze upon the wall,
Whereby thou goest, maid imperial!
I kiss the earth, and gaze upon the house,
Whereby thou farest, queen most beauteous!

III

The moon hath risen her plaint to lay
Before the face of Love Divine,
Saying in heaven she will not stay,
Since you have stolen what made her shine:
Aloud she wails with sorrow wan,—
She told her stars and two are gone:
They are not there; you have them now;
They are the eyes in your bright brow.

IV

I'll build a house of sobs and sighs,
With tears the lime I'll slack;
And there I'll dwell with weeping eyes
Until my love come back;
And there I'll stay with eyes that burn
Until I see my love return.

V

It was the morning of the first of May,
Into the close I went to pluck a flower;
And there I found a bird of woodland gay,
Who whiled with songs of love the silent hour.
O bird, who fliest from fair Florence, how
Dear love begins, I prithee teach me how!—
Love it begins with music and with song,
And ends with sorrow and with sighs ere long.

VI

If I were master of all loveliness,
I'd make thee still more lovely than thou art;
If I were master of all wealthiness,

Much gold and silver should be thine, sweetheart:

If I were master of the house of hell,
I'd bar the brazen gates in thy sweet face;
Or ruled the place where purging spirits dwell,
I'd free thee from that punishment apace.
Were I in Paradise, and thou shouldst come,
I'd stand aside, my love, to make thee room;
Were I in Paradise, well seated there,
I'd quit my place to give it thee, my fair!

Trans. by John Addington Symonds.

A POPULAR SONG

ON THE DEATH OF THE BANDIT,

PIETRO MANCINO

Peter meanwhile perceived the time draw nigh,
When he must make his soul prepare to die,
And night and day he called on Heaven's queen,
His advocate, to whom he'd faithful been,
And still had kept her day from sin most clear,
And Saturday alone throughout the year
He wrought no ill. On Mary then he cried,
And weeping with his priest, in penance died.

Trans. by Maria Graham.

ON THE DAY THE HOLY VIATICUM

CAME TO ME

By Giovanni Prati.—1814-1884

Thou Lord of life and glorious King of heaven,
Thou by the world, the universe, adored,
In Thy mysterious veil Thou now hast given
To me Thy presence, as my prayer implored.
I thank Thee, God. Th' aspiring soul is even

One instant languishing and now restored.
As grass in earth, to be from its root riven,
Thou canst my death decree, for Thou art Lord.
So be it as Thou wilt; to Thy kind care,
If I must die, my dear ones I consign,
Whom now I cannot name with tearless eyes.
Let not my daughter's steps the foe ensnare,
But guide her lovingly in ways divine.
I pardon all and thus Thy pardon prize.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

THE LAST HOURS OF TORQUATO TASSO

By Giovanni Prati

'Twas nightfall of a dying April day,
Remote indeed from us but worthy still
That the earth mourns it with eternal tears!
Above the fields of long-distinguished Rome
Smiled all the glittering firmament with stars;
In long array the temples now grew white,
The urns of famous Caesars, too, were pierced
By the o'erhanging moon, and the seven hills,
Clothed by the earth so oft in triumph trod,
Were as seven giants buried in deep sleep . . .
And thro' the vast, immense surrounding space
Naught could be heard except the sullen sound
That's made by the unresting Tiber's flow.
From biting griefs and from all shame and crime
Both high and low have respite in the night.
Upon its natal rock the eagle rests.
The worm lies in the furrows of the hedge.
And in the giant falling shadows' gloom
Beneath the interminable arch of heaven
All things now sleep. Ah, no! only one wakes,

Eternal guardian of the human race,
Misfortune, and lo! in her wake the crowner
Of the afflicted, Death!

Ah! flourishes
Within the Capitol a laurel branch
To deck Torquato's hair, and from the cone—
—Like tents of heaven these planets will not flee
Nor shine again until th' illustrious hair
Shall fall upon and gently shade the cheeks so wan,
And then made rigid by the hand of death.
Oh little cloud that down there didst fall back,
Along the azure west dilate, expand
Thy size most pitifully, and so close
The light of heaven that saddened mortal eyes
It may no more offend, since in the world
An hour of deepest grief is now at hand,
And of its noblest plant shall be deprived
The garden of the earth.

Behold him! how unlike,
How diff'rent from his previous state. No more
Of chivalry and splendor, no more heard
Neighings of fiery steeds and pomps and jousts,
No darings of a soul magnanimous
And proud. Glories of youth have passed away.
A squalid wall, the ray of doubtful lamp,
Poor covering, and a few kind, pious friends,—
The brothers of a cloister, stand around.

* * * * *

Torquato raised
His feeble hand with pain and crossed himself.
Then in deep thought he seemed
In desperate tears
He then broke forth.

"May heaven count for you
These tears, O Tasso! Now come; courage take,
Comfort and peace: miserable have men
Made you, tis true; but God gave you a soul
Both free and great!"

"A dreadful cross, a cross
He gave me and naught else. Oh my dear mother's
House! Oh happy years of deep obscurity
Lived without glory"!

"The sacrosanct,
Pure gift of God curse not, Torquato, now.
. Oh let your heart recall
Unhappy Alighieri"!

Torquato
Blushed with shame at such a name and checked
His sad lament.

* * * * *

The poet's eyes
Flashed light; silent he lay,—Then ever paler
Grew his lips; a breath almost divine
Hovered around that open, noble brow
Which in deep meditations seemed absorbed.
His smile was not too humble nor too proud.
But eyes and mien were full of nobleness.
Then, as moved by an ecstasy of joy,
He looked more beautiful than mortal man.

Etc.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

THE FLAG OF TRUCE (1849)

By Arnaldo Fusinato.—1817-1888

"The twilight is deepening, still is the wave;
I sit by the window, mute as by a grave;
Silent, companionless, secret I pine;

Thro' tears where thou liest I look, Venice mine.

On the clouds brokenly strewn thro' the west
Dies the last ray of the sun sunk to rest;
And a sad sibilance under the moon
Sighs from the broken heart of the lagoon.

Out of the city a boat draweth near:
"You of the gondola! tell us what cheer?"
"Bread lacks, the cholera deadlier grows;
From the lagoon bridge the white banner blows."

No, no, nevermore on so great a woe,
Bright sun of Italy, nevermore glow!
But o'er Venetian hopes shattered so soon,
Moan in thy sorrow forever, lagoon!

Venice, to thee comes at last the last hour;
Martyr illustrious, in thy foe's power;
Bread lacks, the cholera deadlier grows;
From the lagoon bridge the white banner blows.

Not all the battle-flames over thee streaming;
Not all the numberless bolts o'er thee screaming;
Not for these terrors thy free days are dead:
Long live Venice! She's dying for bread!

On thy immortal page, sculpture, O Story,
Others' iniquities, Venice's glory;
And three times infamous ever be he
Who triumphed by famine, O Venice, o'er thee.

Long live Venice! Undaunted she fell;
Bravely she fought for her banner and well;
But bread lacks, the cholera deadlier grows;
From the lagoon bridge the white banner blows.

And now be shivered upon the stone here
Till thou be free again, O lyre I bear.
Unto thee, Venice, shall be my last song,
To thee the last kiss and the last tear belong.

Exiled and lonely, from hence I depart,
But Venice forever shall live in my heart;
In my heart's sacred place Venice shall be
As is the face of my first love to me.

But the wind rises, and over the pale
Face of its waters the deep sends a wail;
Breaking, the chords shriek, and the voice dies.
On the lagoon bridge the white banner flies."

Trans. by W. D. Howells.

SPITE

By Ersilio Bicci. 1900

"If I go by her window singing,
'Tis not for her I sing;
If jealousy her heart be wringing,
I care not for anything.
If she should hear in any song of mine
A note of woe,
'Tis not for her; I to sad songs incline
Because they please me so.

If they should tell her I am thin and pale,
It is the weather makes me weak and frail.

If they should tell her that I long to die,
What's that to her? I'm not her lover—I.

And yet with Gigi should I meet her, know,
She to the grave, I to the galleys go.

Trans. by Mary A. Craig.

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

A Dramatic Fragment by Arturo Graf. 1901

Lazarus Speaks:

"Wherefore, Master, awake me
Out of so sweet a sleep—
And all so well forgotten?
Since first, mine eyes uplifting,
I looked on the hollow, shifting
Pageant of earth,
Never did overtake me
Repose more deep:—
So sweetly had I forgotten
My human birth.
Oh Master, wherefore awake me?
Around me, as I lay
There was no night, no day,
Creation swam undone:
No time, no change at all.
I heard no faintest echo of any tone
From this dread vale funereal.
No vain desire disturb'd
My trance, no memory turbid,
No sorrow gnawed me here,
No sting of sharp remorse felt I, no fear.
Of so great peace
Why wilt thou me deprive?
Why must I rise and wrestle
Where the cruel sunbeams dazzle
My shrinking sense,

And the cries are an offense
Of the tortured folk who live?
Leave me, my Master, free of pain,
Buoyed up by lovesome death, and light as air!
Let me but nestle
In my grave again
Like a creature of the wildwood in its lair”!

Jesus Speaks:

“Man, but thy heart is cold, and, man, thy courage
feeble!
Base are thy words, and base is thy distress.
Art thou alone in the world? Is thine the only
trouble?
Art thou, then, sisterless and brotherless?
Who art thou, to have won the wages of peace
already?
Who art thou, to have loved, much as a mortal can?
Loving, trusting on, with faith serene and steady—
Hast thou then done enough, and suffered enough,
oh man?
Why do the vain waves break on the cliff ascending
sheerly?
Why do the worlds revolve? Why do the minutes
fly?
Why does the grass of the field grow green and
wither yearly?
Why do kingdoms fall, and men be born and die?
Mine is a call to light and life. So hear it!
Call to valorous work, and the strife whereby men
grow.
Up, thou lingering, languishing, cowering, pitiful
spirit!

Out of the grave with thee! Gird up thy loins and
go"!

Translator Unknown.

“THE PRINTING PRESS AND
THE REFORMATION”

Sonnet from the “Rime Nuove” of G. Carducci
(1889.)

“I believe,” said one; and sluggish, stealthy-still
Foul manuscripts, like wild beasts in a den,
Dozed in the cloister, and the dull moor-hen
On Truth’s vast thunderbolts bestowed a quill.
“I think,” said one; and with a quickened will
Industrial art gave to the thoughts of men
Metalic wings, whose flight brings to their ken
Free messengers of noble strife or ill.
Forth flew the little book to speak to all;
At Rome the haughty challenger intoned
—Transcribed to rugged Saxon verse—God’s word.
It flew; thro’ air still burdened with the pall
Of smoking pyres, to Zuyder Zee enthroned
On happy shores, and Charles dropped crown and
sword.”

Trans. by Laura Fullerton Gilbert.

AT THE STATION
ON AN AUTUMN MORNING

By Giosuè Carducci

Lamp after lamp how the lights go trooping,
Stretching behind the trees, dreamily yonder;
Through the branches adrip with the shower
The light slants and gleams on the puddles.

Plaintively, shrilly, piercingly whistles
The engine hard by. Cold and grey are the heavens
Up above, and the Autumn morning
Ghostlike glimmers around me.

Whither and whence move the people hurrying
Into dark carriages muffled and silent?
To what sorrows unknown are they rushing—
Long tortures of hopes that will tarry?

You too, oh fair one, are dreamily holding
Your ticket now for the guard's sharp clipping—
Ah, so clips Time, ever relentless,
Joys, memories, and years that are golden.

Far-stretching the dark train stands, and the work-
men

Black-capped, up and down keep moving like shad-
ows;

In his hand bears each one a lantern,
And each one a hammer of iron.

And the iron they strike sends a hollow resounding
Mournful; and out of the heart an echo
Mournfully answers, a sudden
Dull pang of regret that is weary.

Now the hurrying slam of the doors grows insulting
And loud, and scornful the rapidly sounding
Summons to start and delay not;
The rain dashes hard on the windows.

Puffing, shuddering, panting, the monster
Now feels life stir in its limbs of iron,
And opens its eyes and startles
The dim far space with a challenge.

Then on moves the evil thing, horribly trailing
Its length, and, beating its wings bears from me
My love, and her face and her farewell
Are lost to me now in the darkness.

O sweet face flushed with the palest of roses!
O starlike eyes so peaceful! O forehead
Pure-shining and gentle, with tresses
Curling so softly around it.

The air with a passionate life was a-tremble,
And summer was glad when she smiled to greet me;
The young sun of June bent earthward
And kissed her soft cheek in his rapture.

Full 'neath the nut-brown hair he kissed her;
But though his beauty and splendor might circle
Her gentle presence—far brighter
The glory my thoughts set around her.

There in the rain, in the dreary darkness
I turn me, and with them would mingle my being;
I stagger; then touch myself grimly—
Not yet as a ghost am I moving.

O what a falling of leaves, never-ending,
Icy, and silent, and sad, on my spirit!
I feel that forever around me
The earth has grown all one November.

Better to be without sense of existence—
Better this gloom and this shadow of darkness.
Would I, ah, would I were sleeping
A dull sleep that lasteth forever.

Trans. by H. Courthope Bowen.

THE POET

By Giosuè Carducci.—1907

Foolish crowd! Apollo's son
Is not one
Who to other tables led
By his base and greedy wishes
Carries dishes,
From the cupboard steals the bread.

Nor an idle loiterer, he
Pryingly
Into every corner follows
Whom he sees, and nose in air
Turns his stare
From the angels to the swallows.

Nor, a petty gardener, spreads
On life's beds
Refuse stuff, and cauliflowers;
From it for the gentry grows,
In due rows
Violets for the ladies' bowers.

No, he is a craftsman strong
In his song.
Thews of steel he has and high
Bears his head, with neck robust
And bared bust,
Sinewy arm and blithesome eye.

Scarce the pious, joyous bird
Hath been heard
Laughing where the morning breaks,

He his furnace seeks, and fast
 Bellows' blast
Flame and glee and toil awakes.

For the flame then creeps and glows,
Sparkles throws,
Reddens as it boldly plays;
Then it hisses, then it roars,
 Then it soars,
Crackling in a mighty blaze.

Unto what shall all this grow?
 God may know,
Who on the great craftsman smiles—
Elements of love and thought
 He has brought,
And upon the furnace piles.

And his fathers' deeds and glories
 In old stories
And the strokes by heroes dealt,
All the Future and the Past
 He hath cast
In the glowing mass to melt.

Grasps it, then with hammer blows
 And great throes,
Works it on the anvil; now
Smites and sings, while sunbeams high
 In the sky
Gild the rugged toil and brow.

Smites and lo! for Freedom's uses
 Swords produces;
Mighty massive shields are there,

For heroic names and fames
Wreathes he frames,
Diadems for beauty's hair.

Still he smites, and sculptured shrines
He designs
For the household god and priest—
Tripods shapes and altars fair,
And most rare
Gems and vases for the feast.

I, poor struggler in the craft,
A gold shaft
Make, and bid it sunward soar;
Watch it glittering in the sky,
Up on high,
Watch, am glad and seek no more.
Trans. by Arabella Shore.

ON AN ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF MENTANA

By Giosuè Carducci, "Nuove Poesie"—13

When sad Mentana's hour comes round with every
year returning,
Amid the monumental slabs that keep its memory
green,
The ghosts of those who fell arise, their hearts with
anger burning,
With sorrowing eyes amid the tombs they stand
distinctly seen,

No ghastly skeletons are they, but proper forms and
stately,

The rosy twilight undulates around them like a veil;
From their far deeps the stars look down upon the
brave sedately,

The clouds of heaven around their heads in wreaths
of victory sail.

"Now when the mother mourns her sons on couch
by memories haunted,

Now when the spouse weeps her lost love thro'
nights of sleepless pain,

Again we seek the upper air with breasts pure and
undaunted,

Once more to greet thee, Italy, to look on thee again.

"As in the muddy pathway before his queen and
lady,

His silken mantle fine the knight laid down on
bended knee,

Our lives we gave up freely, in thy service ever
ready,

And yet thou liv'st unmindful of the sons who died
for thee.

"On others, O sweet Italy, bestow thy smiles, but
never,

Oh never, may the dead forget what they on earth
loved best!

And Rome is ours, the champions of her name are
we forever,

We on her lofty Capitol shall triumph ere we rest."

The vision fades, as melts away a faint cloud in
the heaven,

And as it fades a groan escapes Italian bosoms all;

Her brightness and her harmony lays down the
golden even,
While the sad sound rolls sternly up the lofty
Quirinal.

Trans. by M. R. Weld.

A MIDSUMMER DREAM

By Giosuè Carducci.—1836-1907

Reading of battles once, in the sounding measure
of Homer,
All in a drowsy summer noon, I sank into slumber;
Then, from Scamander's banks, my soul to Tyrrhen-
ian waters
Fled, and I dreamed—oh sweetly dreamed!—of my
earliest being.
No more books!—but the room, so hot with the
Julian Solstice,
Loud with the roar of wheels on the stony streets of
the city,
Opened wide, and the hills of home were soaring
around me,
Dear, wild hills, alive with the delicate leafage of
April.
Over the height a slim cascade, with gladdening
murmur
Fell, and became a stream, whereby was walking—
my mother!
Young she seemed, and fresh as a flower, and there
clung to her finger,
—White neck full of shining curls—a beautiful
urchin.
Proudly he trudged along, and set his infantile foot-
steps,

Glad of his mother's love, and glad, in the core of
his being,
Over the tuneful joy of Nature's infinite festa.
Then I knew 'twas Ascension eve, for aloft, in the
castle
Bells rang out for the Christ, going back to his
heaven, to-morrow.
And the melodious bars of the vernal canticle
flowed from
Peak to level, blent with the whisper of leaves and
of fountains.
Rosy the flower of the peach, and white the flower
of the apple;
Smiled in blossoms of gold and blue, the turf of the
meadow;
All the hillsides flaunted in yellow broom, and the
valleys
Decked themselves for the feast, in mantle of san-
guine clover.
Then while a soft sea wind arose, and the flowers
gave odor,
Seaward I looked, and saw four snow-white sails in
the offing.
Balancing, balancing slow, they passed along, in
the sunshine,
Whereby earth, and sea, and sky, in glory were
blended.
Full at the orb she gazed—my happy, maidenly
mother—
I at her, and upon my brother—wondering, doubt-
ing,
—He who lies afar on a hill overlooking the Arno,
She who sleeps hard by—in the waste of the solemn
Certosa—

Wondering, doubting—are they alive? or, in their
compassion

Have they but come to soothe my grief, from the
shores of revival,

Where the lost years abide, and the forms of those
who have left us?

So they passed—the dream and my dearly beloved
together.

Laura was singing a merry strain in a neighboring
chamber,

Bice, above her frame, was peacefully plying the
needle.

Trans. in Littell's Living Age, Dec. 12, 1896.

TO GARIBALDI ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF MENTANA

November 3rd, 1880

From the *Alcaics of Carducci*.—1836-1907

Our great dictator, silently pondering
Conducts the march. His decimate companies
Trudge on behind the lonely rider;
Lead are the skies, and the land is wintry.

His charger's footfall, plashing monotonous
In mire is heard, and, echoing after it,
The rhythmic tramp of men, and deep-drawn
Sigh in the darkness, of hearts heroic.

But every mound of livid mortality,
And sod bedewed with animate crimson,
Where'er made stand a fated handful
Dear Mother Italy, of thy children—

Diffused a light like stars in the firmament,
A message breathed of heavenly melody;
While Rome the eternal shone before, and
Rang o'er the slaughter an airy paean:—

“Mentana spurns the shame of the centuries:
The foul embrace of priest and of emperor:
Thou, Garibaldi, in Mentana,
Settest thy foot upon Pope and Kaiser!

Oh Aspromonte's rebel magnificent,
And oh Mentana's valorous conqueror,
Go tell this tale, and tell Palermo's
On the high Capitol, to Camillo”!

So clear a chant of mystical choristers
Was heard in all the borders of Italy,
The day there fell a touch of healing
On the poor prey of the tyrant's lashes.

And now, beloved, thee, her new Romulus,
New Rome salutes with rapturous piety,
Thy star ascends. Oh, far from falling
Stillness of death upon thee, divinest!

Across the abyss of nameless humanity,
The ages call thy spirit illustrious.
To heights where sit in solemn council
Gods of the soil of our sacred country.

Thy star ascends: and Dante amazedly
To Virgil saith—“Our heroes of fantasy
Were less than he”—But Livy, smiling,—
“He is of History, oh my poets”!

In him, the bold and patient Ligurian,
Lives on the line of Hesperian citizens;
With lofty look, he stands for justice,
Bathed in the beams of a bright ideal.

Oh Lion-heart! In fiery ebullience
Of Aetna's caves, or thunder of cataracts,
From Alpine heights thou beatest always
Full in defiance of beast and tyrant!

But calmly too in heave of cerulean
Seas, or the balmy breath of the flower-time,
When suns of May shed sweet effulgence
Over the mighty who sleep in marble.

Trans. in Littell's Living Age for Dec. 12, 1896.

EVENING

By Antonio Fogazzaro.—1842-1911

(BELLS OF ORIA)

The waning light glows in the west,
The shadows of night come down;
O Lord, from evil powers
Keep mortals through these hours.
Let us pray.

(BELLS OF OSTENO, ON THE SHORE)

We from the lake
Our silence break,
Deep voices wake;
O Lord, from evil powers
Keep mortals through these hours.
Let us pray.

(BELLS OF FURIA)

We too—remote
Amid the mountains lone,
Call thee, O Lord,
From evil powers
Keep mortals through dark hours.
Let us pray.

(ECHOES OF THE VALLEY)

Let us pray.

(ALL THE BELLS TOGETHER)

Light lives and dies again,
Of dawn and sunset what remain?
All things, O Lord,
Save the Eternal in this lower world
Are vain.

(ECHOES OF THE VALLEY)

Are vain.

(BELLS ALL TOGETHER)

Let us pray, let us pray with tears
From vale and marge and mountain,
For the dead and for the living—
For hidden crimes and griefs and tears,
All the sorrow
That draws not nigh Thee;
All the error
That would deny Thee;
All the love

That swears not by Thee.
Pity, Most Holy!

(ECHOES OF THE VALLEY)

Most Holy!

(ALL THE BELLS)

Pray for those that are sleeping
In holy ground,
If their slumber profound
Guilt or innocence be keeping,
Mystery most holy,
Thou knowest only.

(ECHOES OF THE VALLEY)

Thou knowest only.

(ALL THE BELLS)

Pray for the sorrow
Of all the wide world,
All the living, the loving,
The feeling, the mourning;
Pray the Omnipotent
That peace be sent
To mountain and shore.
And to the clanging bronze once more
Let there be peace.

(ECHOES OF THE VALLEY)

Peace.

Translated by Mary A. Craig.

TWILIGHT

By Giovanni Pascoli.—(1912)

“To each other Heaven and earth are speaking
As the brightness fades into the gloom.
In the sky a ruddy star is keeping
Tryst with rush-light in the cabin home.

Terrene voices speak to the celestial
When thou, earth, becomest black anon,
When it seems time stops and all that’s bestial
Waits to put a nobler vesture on.

In the azure vortex are three planets,
Windows three on river bank I spy.
Seven houses in the village; can its
Number match the Pleiades on high?

Each house white, and there are white star clusters,
Sirius, Algol, Arcturus show
One star or a group of stars thus musters
For each man and ev’ry tribe below.

For a world itself each home’s portraying,
Flaming with a candle that is meet.
Yet its joyous tumult makes no braying
That is heard at distance of two feet.

And among the humble world’s ascending
Like a greyish veil the fireside’s smoke.
So the milky way in Heaven is tending
To a calm that higher heights evoke.”

Trans. by Florence Trail.

THE SHOP

By Renato Fucini. 1843—

Now, my boy, you're eighteen, and you must learn—
That is to say, if you're worth anything—

With your own tongue and brains your bread to
earn.

Now to your Saint your best prayers you must sing.

This shop, and that across the street, are ours,
And not a sou of debt on either lies.

You shall have that one, call up all your powers
If you would live, nor smaller gains despise.

Mind now and then to wet the salt. Take care
That no one gets the better of you. Snatch
And squeeze upon the weight when'er you can.

Then with the help of heaven, now here, now there,
Believe me that 'tis easy, if you watch,
To get your bread well as another man.

Trans. by Mary A. Craig.

WHEN AUTUMN'S LEAVES

By Lorenzo Stecchetti. 1845—

When autumn's leaves have fallen, and thou dost
hie

To seek my cross down in the churchyard lone,
In some deserted nook shalt see it lie,
And flow'rets sweet o'er it will then have grown;

Oh, cull them to adorn thy golden hair,
Those flow'rs born of my heart. I ween they were
The poems that I thought, but never sung,
The words of love, ne'er uttered by my tongue.

Trans. by Baroness Swift.

REFLECTED HEAVEN

By Vicortai

I

"The mountain-tops above the mist
Like summer islands lie:
Now we together both were blest
If thither we could fly.
And you, while at
Your feet I sat
Would gaze into the skies;
But I would be
Content to see
Their glory in your eyes."

II

SUMMER IN WINTER

"Winter is it? Summer splendor
Never was so fair to see!—
All because a maiden tender
Gave today her heart to me.

Heaven a happy lifetime lend her,
Long, and from all evil free;
For the graces that commend her
Make her life the life of me."

III

THE VIOLET'S GRAVE

"The woodland! And a golden wedge
Of sunshine slipping through!
And there, beside a bit of hedge,
A violet so blue!

So tender was its beauty, and
So douce and sweet its air,
I stopped and yet withheld my hand,—
Would pluck and yet would spare.

Now which were best? for spring will pass
And vernal beauty fly—
On maiden's breast or in the grass,
Where would you choose to die?"

IV

SUMMER EVE

"It is the hour when all things rest:
The sun sits in the bannered west,
And looks along the golden street
That leads o'er ocean to his feet.

Sea birds with summer on their wing
Down the wide west are journeying.
And one white star serenely high
Peeps through the purple of the sky.

O sky, and sea, and shore, and air,
How tranquil are ye now, and fair!
But twice the joy ye are were ye
If one that's dead companioned me."

V

A DEDICATION

"Like spray blown lightly from the crested wave
To glitter in the sun,
So from my heart love gave
The airy fancies to the eyes of a belovèd one;
But who shall guess
From the blown foam that in the sunbeam shines
What secret stores there be
Of unsunn'd sea?
Ah! how much less
The depths of what I feel from these poor broken-
lines
I dedicate to thee!"

VI

FELIX, FELIX TER QUATERQUE!

"Shout and sing, ye merry voices
Of the mountain forest free!
What, but late, were jarring noises
Now as music are to me!
Earth in bridal bloom rejoices,
Heaven benignly bends to see!

He, beloved of her his choice is,
Blest of all the boys is he!
Blest of all the world of boys is
He that's telling this to thee!
Shout and sing ye merry voices!
Fill the forest with your glee!"

Trans. in Littell's Living Age, 1881.

THE FUGITIVES

By Vicortai

"Dear love! we have left them behind us,
Behind us, and far below!
They will search a month ere they find us
In the hill-wood where we go.

Listen! . . . that is the voice of the forest,
It is whispering us words of cheer:
Ah, my heart, when my heart was sorest,
Has often been healed up here!

Why do you cling to me, darling,
And bury your face in my breast!
You may well be at ease where the starling
Has grown a familiar guest.

The forest and the mountain,
And I are old, old friends,
And the wild birds and the fountain
And the sky that o'er them bends.

And the friends of my youth and my childhood,
Thou maiden of the sea,
That hidest thy face in the wildwood,—
How could they be foes to thee?

Look up, my own heart maiden!
No foot of man comes here;
'Tis tenantless as Eden
Throughout the tranquil year!

But I am nearly forgetting
Old Philip and his wife;
From sunrise to sunseting
They lead a simple life.

'Tis sixty years since he brought her
To share his board and bed;
And they had a son and a daughter—
But *she* is long since dead.

And the boy became a soldier,
And marched to the wars away;
And the old couple grow still older
In the wood here where they stay.

How brightly your eyes are shining,
And but the trace of a tear!
With your cheek on my arm reclining,
Dear heart, you should have no fear.

They sit far up on the mountain
Beside their clean swept hearth,
Where the river is only a fountain,
And heaven is nearer than earth.

The goodwife knits her stocking,
And Philip should trap the game;
But he's old, so the birds are flocking,
And the blue hares are quite tame.

The mother thinks of her daughter
And her hair that outshone the sun;
But Philip dreams of slaughter
And of his wayward son.

There is none, you know, to advise her.
Excepting her prejudiced mate,
Ah, heaven! the mother is wiser,
As love is better than hate.

So the mother knits and fondles
In fancy the flaxen hair,
While Philip a sabre handles
And starts in his sleep in his chair.

How far to their cottage is it?—
A good hour's climb, I should say:
Of course we must pay them a visit,
And they're sure to ask us to stay.

So now sweetheart, if you're rested,
We'll farther up the wood:
Many a night have I nested
Here in the solitude.

It's grand in the wood in the sunlight
As the sunlight's falling now,
But I like it too when the wan light
Of the moon is on each bough.

Look back! she is floating yonder—
I saw her between the trees,
When their fringes were drawn asunder
By the fingers of the breeze.

How naked and forsaken
She shrinks from the blue day-sky!
At night, never fear, she'll awaken
And lift her horn on high.

Look up through the boles before us,
And the long dear slanting lines
Where the light that shimmers o'er us
Is sifted through the pines!

It's a good hour yet till gloaming,
And then we've Selene's light;
And it's pleasant this woodland roaming
In search of a home for the night.

Give me your hand, my darling!
We're safe in the solitude:
In the world beneath us there's snarling—
There's peace in the mountain wood."
Trans. in Littell's Living Age. 1881

A SYMPHONY OF BEETHOVEN

By Enrico Nencioni

What have I seen and heard? Mourning and
laughter,
Loud cries of joy, of terror, desperate yells
Of furious fight. The slow continual lap
Of lakes against the shore, the solemn sound
Of forests where the autumn tempests blow.
The cattle-bells of Tyrolean mountains;
The chanted prayer in sacred aisles of Spain.
Hark! now the silvery notes go ringing, blending
Into the measure of the mazy dance
Of white-robed girls along the flowery sward.
Then comes the silence that precedes the storm,
The vast wild whirlwind and the lashing sweep

Of pouring rain; the thunder's awful voice,
The rattle of the hail on roofs and windows.
The silence sinks again; the storm is over,
The sun shines out once more, the rainbow spans
The face of heaven. But hark! a note of woe—
Mournful, persistent. Who art thou that weepest?—
Art thou Desdemona? It was a dream.
The world is full of roses, and Anacreon
Sang but the truth. Fill up the goblet!

Hail!

The sky is full of light, and Iseult smiles.

Trans. by Mary A. Craig.

CLOSING LINES OF A CANZONE

THE FLOWERS AND THE STARS

To Her Son on His 20th Birthday

By Caterina Franceschi Ferruci.—(Living)

As fades and dies the rose,
And as the lily's stalk in winter's cold,
So languish in my heart
The hopes that youth bestows,
The faith and fond desires and ready scorn.
But as the shining stars burn on and ne'er depart
So lives in me one thought that ne'er grows old,
Immortal, fadeless, bright,
Which at its will can turn
The bold mind to the just, the true, the right.
Thro' it new marvels I may greet
And contemplate, while in my heart there plays
A harmony unutterably sweet.

It spurs me on to better ways,
And in one blessed tie
Restrains my wishes, my affections stills.
Only thro' it I lie
Passive beneath the strokes of fate.
My strengthened mind it fills
With power to gaze into the future state.
O thou, my earliest care, on whom now smiles
The novel season of youth's tender years,
Thee love with its false flatteries to errors sweet,
To fugitive desires
And to deceptive hope invites.
To-day how fair appears
The path that thee delights!
Where'er thou turn'st thy foot thou see'st the ground
Bear violets and lilies for thy joy:
And where thine eye aspires
There shines a splendid sun, without annoy.
Pin not thy faith to joys so fleet,
Nor air of quiet so profound.
Already shrieks the wind and thunders forth
The storm awakening direst fears.
Leave, leave the flowers of earth,
On which the rain must fall, the hail congeal.
Behold the stars, see what the heavens reveal.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

THE PIERCING OF THE APENNINE

By Giovanni Marradi.—(Living)

The sky darkens over the waves of the Rhine,
And the train, from the last of the light,
Deep under the Tuscan Apennine
Plunges into the gloom of the night.

Aroused by the sound of its devilish scream,
Awake all the forests around;
It breaks through their slumber, it shatters their
dream,
Where they stand, spectral, awful, profound.

What new creature is this with its voice and its
glare
That threatens the wide forest old?
How the numberless branches toss into the air
Against the invader so bold!

That flies night and day, by the light, in the dark,
Through the depths of the primeval stone,
And flouts the vast silence, with hiss and with
spark,
Where the mountain once reigned all alone.

The old trees in vain from their roots underground
The monstrous intruder defy,
To whose mighty war-song the echoes profound
With wild exultation reply.

Then he sweeps out below; from the darkness
appearing,
Like a serpent glides over the plain,
And leaving behind him the freight he was bearing
Rushes into the distance again.

For the trees, when the breezes of morning awake
On the slopes of the mountain so free,
Do they wonder, perhaps, with a pitying surprise,
What this pale race of mortals can be;

These unquiet beings, that pierce thro' the hills,
With breathless impatience desiring
Some less troubled dawn, that the far distance fills,
Involving, tormenting, inspiring?

Trans. by Mary A. Craig.

QUATRAIN FROM A SONNET

By Giovanni Marradi

Verse is not all, O poet, unless she fly
Upon the wings of noble thought and bear
The perfume of the soul into the air
Drawn from the spirit's depths, eternally.

Trans. by Mary Craig.

A VINTAGE (PEASANT) SONG

My lovely charmer, who hath made thine eyes,
That fill our bosoms with such ecstasies?
Their glance would draw the sick man from his bed,
Or haply pierce the tomb and raise the dead.
Oh! my sweet love, thy beauty and thy worth
Are all my hope and all my joy on earth.

Trans. by Janet Ross.

TWO KINDS OF POVERTY

By Giuseppe Levantini-Pieroni. (Living)

"Around the lone street corner, whistling shrill,
The winds no quarter yield;
Laden with falling snow the air is chill
And every star concealed.

With a torn cloth half cov'ring her bare arm
A woman speeds her fast.
With scant protection for her wretched form,
All squalid in the blast.

Advancing, putting nervousness aside,
She says: "Please Sir, some pence.
My babes inspire me with a righteous pride,
You cannot drive me hence."

He turns and gazes on her; seeks his den,
Foreclosing feeling's door.
And she, "O Holy Virgin, is there then
No pity for the poor?"

But what! A thought like lightning strikes a blow
And makes him turn and start.
Why should he not to her his sorrows show,
The groanings of his heart?

"O miserable one," he falters forth,
"My fate is like thy own.
In vain the husks and trappings of false mirth
Can check the inward moan.

A luring cloak may with its tinsel keep
These secrets in my breast,
But with their goads driven in so very deep
They all the more molest."

But in the rich young lord a lordly scorn
His palpitations stills.
He leaves the woman supperless, forlorn,
Forgetful of her ills.

'Twere hard the various forms of griefs to tell,
The direst must appall.
Yet poets sing, the sage proclaims, 'tis well,
'That equal are we all'!

Trans. by Florence Trail.

THE POET'S PLEA

By Ulisse Poggi.—(Living)

"Why poets? To emerge from mud,
From putrid age thro' space to fly.
Of infinite worlds request a world
Which breathing hope gives hell the lie.
To make this world, omnipotent o'er all
Thro' fire of love and tears of joy
To give it life,—is poet's role so small?

They live and breathe for us, with us
Speak forms unborn and forms long dead.
The uncreated soul of All
Confounds us thro' our sacred dread.
But girding with bold thought the body too,
At our command Proteus will rise
And unreluctantly set forth the True.

The True, which oft rebellious seems
To analysing Wisdom's scales,
Divisions, subdivisions, weights,
The doubt that mocks the doubt that quails;
If light of poet's torch do not appear
Whereby imagination aids
To hold the scattered facts and make them clear.

Why poets? O we break 'Time's scythe,
'Tis ours to cut Time's wings and cleanse
The stains from Beauty, free and strong,
Which now, thro' an immortal lens,
Rejoices as it scatters near and far
Glad gifts, or sometimes flashes forth
Amid the raging elements of war.

Or woman's eye may be its throne,
Or woman's smile, wherewith she rules
And all that earth and sea and sky
Has of delight and storm controls.
And makes the ready heart vibrate with love,
Not as a trafficker or brute,
But with magnanimous desires will move.

What is the virtue, what the Art
To which we do not point the way?
Who then intones the solemn hymn
That gives youth strength and quells dismay?
Archilochus could wield a vocal dart
Emitting terror never sent
By sword of Brutus to the tyrant's heart.

How men rejoice in the bright flame
Of noble thoughts and brave emprise
Enkindled in the poet's breast,
—Alive with fire that never dies.
Well did they in past time most justly say
That bard and hero ranked alike,
And worthily were crowned with the same bay.

Ye foolish ones, snared by your pride,
Enamored of a splendid mask,

And roll of meters full and strong.
We take the arid truth to task
And dare transcend the useful ye despise,
And pleasures that appeal to sense.
But ye, to do us homage, are too wise.

Up, hasten then to suffocate
Ecstatic love's sublimest darts,
Up, turn to calculation's cold
Your little children's tender hearts.
The State all civilized, yet pettish, pleads
To bite its mother's breast and boast
Itself a slave to barb'rous aims and needs.

To needs insatiable, alas!
Desires unnumbered; yet a wail
Breaks forth when down the torrent pours,
Shows cherished dykes of no avail,
Drags virtue in the mire, puts naught instead,
Fallacious makes all Knowledge, lo!
To smoke's changed glory, valor's vile or dead.

From air serene, where flutter wings
Of forms eternal, and prevail
The archetypal ideas still,
Upon the coward throngs that quail
We wage perpetual war, our bolts are hurled;
Our aim as ministers of God
To fight until we renovate the world."

Trans. by Florence Trail.

LINES FROM "FRANCESCA DA RIMINI"

By Gabriele D'Annunzio. 1863—

(Upon seeing red roses in a sarcophagus)

"O beautiful, and perchance
A holy thing, being born in this most ancient
Sarcophagus that was the sepulchre
Perchance of some great martyr or of some
Glorious virgin.

The Redeemer treads
Under his feet the lion and the snake;
Mary saluted by Elizabeth;
Our Lady, and the Angel bids "All hail"!
The stags are drinking at the running brook,
And now the blood of martyrdom reflowers
In purple and in fire. Behold, behold,
Sister, the ardent flame!
Behold the roses that are full of fire!

Trans. by Arthur Symons.

LINES TO A DEAD GIRL

By Annie Vivanti. 1868—

'Mid oaths and blows and pain she grew to girl-
hood,
This child so timid and so slender;
She died at twenty, innocent and gentle,
A martyr weak and tender.

Now the white flowers of heaven the small hands
gather,
The hands that were on earth so weak and weary,
And o'er the star-strewn plains the white feet
wander,
That trod on earth a road so rough and dreary.

The angels bow before the gentle vision,
The golden light her humble forehead blesses,
Shining upon the mild and pallied sweetness
Of those calm lips that here knew no caresses.

Trans. by Mary A. Craig.

ON THE ATLANTIC

By Annie Vivanti.—1892—

"Rages the sea in tempest; and the wind
Lifts up the furious waves into the sky;
Before it all the clouds of heaven fly,
Fly as they were with terror deaf and blind
In heavy troops, black, swift, and infinite.

In vain the eye would seek relief to find
Some calm retreat 'mid all the furious sweep
Wherein the wild waves spring, and break, and leap,
And roll, as they the helpless bark would grind
To ruin in their depths immeasurable.

To right, to left, around us, all around
The water swells, then sinks into the gloom,
Towering before us like a boundless tomb.
What cries! what roaring round us! All around
The waters whirl in endless vortices.

Upright upon the prow I gazing stand,
I think of my far home, I think of thee
Silent and moveless in mine agony.
With stirless eye and clenched and burning hand,
I look into the deep love in my heart.
O sea! O raging sea, how small thou art"! *Trans. by Mary A. Craig.*

THE SONG OF THE SPADE

By Ada Negri

I am a rude sword breaking up the earth.
I'm ignorance and prop.
I catch the sun's rays and I tell of dearth.
I stand for want and hope.

I know the whip of noonday heat, the birth
Of hurricanes that blast.
I know the fragrance that the May sends forth
While labor holds me fast.

Into the falling hut I go and view
Where penetrates the gale,
The idle huddling round the embers few,
The "pellagrosi" pale.

Abandoned in a corner, there I stay
In night's deep, fearsome gloom;
To which belong the cast-off things of day,
And to the smoky room.

While the rice fever shakes the sleep profound
Of women sick and sore,
And nothing breaks the stillness but the sound
Of weary peasants' snore,

I watch, and fond desire inflames my soul.
Of a new dawn I dream,
When, as an oriflamme I shall unroll
In sunlight's brightest gleam.

Serenely splendid, I shall brandished be
By folk all but inspired,
Endowed with vigor, life and bright beauty,
I'll have what I desired.

In those days weapons will be free from blood,
The standards all pure white;
The trodden snake will die because he should
And right the wrong shall smite.

And from the earth bedewed with love and life,
Fragrant with flowers fair,
All purified by the new arduous strife,
Strong both to do and dare,

In tumult loud ev'n to the azure sky
Rude human voices call,
Both as a hymn and sob ascends the cry;
"Peace; labor! bread for all!"

Trans. by Florence Trail.

THE GREAT

By Ada Negri.—1919—

I thrill with admiration for the strong who're kiss'd
Upon the brow by lips Divine,
As to a still more fulgent height by fate they're
press'd
To reign, rejoice and shine.

They have the smiles of genius, inspirations, songs,
And all the follies, too, maybe.

They know all flights of fancy, view this old earth's
wrongs,
And test its harmony;

And from their heights, all moved by noble, pure
intent,

They've launched forth words of sacred might,
And died lapped in the lovely glow their dreams
have lent,
All circumfused with light.

I love the Rebels, those whose hearts have felt the
bite

Of a supreme and lasting pain;
Who wrapped in the divine and holy leash of right
Bid men not weep in vain;

And for th' accursèd ones whom Jesus did redeem,
Betrayed by brothers bitterly,
'Mid mighty throngs have toiled o'er land and sea
and stream
With laws that set them free;

And of a new and glorious time have raised the
hymn,
With an exalted frenzy fired,
Sung the ideal when chains and axe were facing
them,
And died as they desired.

But O, I weep the blood of my heart's inmost core
For all the Great of darkness, such

The famishing, th' oppress'd, the agèd, those bent
o'er
By suffering overmuch.

Whipped by the rod of fate's unfriendly, impious
pow'r,
They've borne no hatred to their foes;
Not stolen, tho' they've seen the ripening grain's
rich dow'r
Mock both their wants and woes;

Who have drunk gall and tears in their deep impo-
tences,
Scourged in the face with ev'ry ill
By blind, all-powerful injustice's offences,
Yet have not sought to kill;

Who at the bottom live, in cold and storms unend-
ing,
Forgotten as a useless clod,
Without e'en sun, without or bread or clothes,
depending
Still on their faith in God;

Who for a bed have naught but mat of straw and
hay
Which dirt and plague foul and begrime,
A common Poor House where their souls may pass
away,
—Love makes their death sublime.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

A WOMAN OF THE PEOPLE

By Ada Negri.—(Living)

He is lord of the forge, and I love him,
All know of the hammer he's king:
Tall, nervy and handsome; I cling
As a child to a man far above him.

When he beats the hot iron to his liking,
As over the furnace he bends
His face has the glow the coal lends,
His denuded neck swells with the striking.

And I then with such pride am elated,
All else seems to me but a clod;
My demon he is as my God,
With his love for my own I am sated!

* * * * *

But a step on the stairs is resounding.—
Now the door wide open is thrown. . . .
I'm trembling, all ashy I've grown,
But my feet as with wings forth are bounding.

Black with dust, yet all splendid his greeting,
So weary, yet with a broad smile,
His arms clasp me close all the while
That his heart on my heart I feel beating.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

BETTER ALONE THAN IN BAD COMPANY

By Marianna Giarre Billi.—(Living)

Go! never, never let me see thee more,
In thine eyes falsehood's self is written plain;
Look for another lady to adore,
I shall not tremble, though thou love again.
Thy treachery will never leave me poor,
Fairer than thou I'll find a hundred men;
And if I find them not, I shall not go
As others do, to seek them; for I know
That when Love comes, from out the loving heart
Pleasure and peace do evermore depart.
If in this world I needs must wretched be,
"Better alone than in bad company."

Go, get thee gone! into the distance fly
As far as e'en my wandering thoughts could go;
Between us put wide plains and mountains high,
To sunder us let the great ocean flow.
Think not a throne could now my pardon buy;
When I was thine, thou shouldst have kept me so.
When I was thine, God knows I loved thee well,
How well I love thee let my misery tell:
I shall not change nor ever love again,
I love thee, and thou gav'st me only pain.
Alas that I should so deserted be!
"Better alone than in bad company."

Trans. by Mary A. Craig.

EPIGRAM

Anonymous

To listen more than talk we're surely made:
Two ears and but one mouth come to our aid.
Trans. by Florence Trail.

INSTANTANEOUS

An Unrhymed Translation of a Beautifully Rhymed

Poem by Guelfo Civinini. 1873—

You did not see this morning,
while we were going out of the still,
Solitary street from the home, and I
looking at the muslin flowers
that shone through on a lilac ribbon
was forgetting to tell you goodbye,

(That languid ribbon seemed a mark
placed in a rosy book of love
that had your amber necklace for title,
that in a new sweet agreement
it might be easier for the reader
to open it at that chapter.)

You did not see not far away
the "pocket kodak" of a British lady
with a sweet freckled face
long and thin as a reed,
who surprised us hand in hand
in our idyllic silence.

So the little photograph
within the pages of a little album
with the records of beautiful Rome,
with the quarters full of children,
the Swiss guards, the ancient Ghetto,
Saint Peter's, the forum, the Navicella,

Shall go far, very far away,
to the house of the English lady,
to a great room on the Thames
cold and cloudy, where never more
it shall see the bright sun of this morning
break laughing from the gray skies.

At times perhaps with her thin hand
to her slender pallid friends
the blonde hostess will show us:
at times her cerulean eyes, in vain
again evoking the sunny country
will in a homesick way turn back to us,

Since among the things recalling
all the Baedeker of her voyage
the most seducing recollection
will be perhaps the unknown lovers
that in a joyous morning of May
she fugitively caught a glimpse of.

The years will pass. How many sunsets
within the Thames will fade away
among high clouds! We will become old,
our brows will lose their color,
and memories will fade
among the heaps of withered flowers.

And in the little photograph
a little faded we will remain
with a pallid melancholy
as persons of another age:
still we will press each others hands,
but our love, where will it be?

Oh who knows where we will be, my dear,
who knows what we shall have in our weary
 hearts,
where will be these joyful hours!
we then will be the ancient fashion:
the amber necklace, the white dress,
things far away. Why do you weep?

Trans. by Florence Trail.

SELECTION OF PROSE POETRY

FROM "FAULTS OF OTHERS"

By Grazia Deledda. 1875—

"And thou believest that thou wilt be happy with
the other? Think well, my darling."

Vittoria shrugged her shoulders, but immediately the expression of her face became grave.

"It is not this, mother! I don't care about happiness!"

And she looked out at length toward the background of the heath, wrinkling her brow. She felt in one instant a mysterious agony, as if the evening was falling even within her: and the need of stopping the light on the horizon, of filling the world with the cry of her passion, impelled her

to get the fisarmonica and to seat herself on the little door step.

With the instrument resting on her knee, she leaned her head to the right to listen better to the notes, while her fine dark fingers ran over the keys, at first light as the feathers of a wing, then tenacious as claws. At once all the heath even to the red horizon seemed to be animated and palpitating. They were cries of joy, calls of love, laments of desire that went from spot to spot, from bush to bush as if seeking in the shadows of the twilight a fantasm that would respond on the same tone; and not finding it turned back, became groans, sobs, voices that asked aid and then quieted down and then changed into foolish laughs of derision. But from the depths of the instrument ascended uninterruptedly a breath at first light, then harsh as the trembling of the bagpipe: and very softly it also increased, it made itself the murmur of the wind, the roar of the sea and the far away woods; it seemed the voice of all the heath around when the March winds beat it; flowers flew, the birds passed shrieking drunk with the whirlwind and with love; passion broke forth furious; then it grew quiet, all returned sweet and ardent, but with a desolating ardor: the ardor of June, the ardor of a woman who waits yet

knowing that she waits in vain and revels
in the thought of death."

Trans. by Florence Trail.

REPLIES

By Amalia Guglielminetti. 1889—

Why I have such large eyes, shaded with violet
and such dark lashes thou forsooth dost ask of me.

Between thy brows shines always a fresh candor,
child-like the smile with which thou look'st and
wonderest.

Thou dost possess the gift of dreaming adolescence,
therefore I speak to thee care-free, and naught but
truth.

My eyes are large because I close them not, because
in sleep's oblivious lethargies I have no joy.

Perhaps vast shadows of nocturnal sleeplessness
dilate them; they're an urn with vigils filled and
heaped.

They look beyond all dreams, all forms. In them
Doth never sleep a curiosity divine.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

MORNINGS

By Amalia Guglielminetti. 1889—

Was it the year I left the nuns and flew
Out of the convent? All confused, unblest?
Thou April didst put on thy rosy hue.

We both awoke, by the same ray caressed,
Thou with a soul all light and bright and gay,
I with my little heart so sore oppressed!

Thou winter wast the crib in which I lay:
My eyes I opened and became a maid,
Thou openedst the skies in Spring's glad way.

Perhaps some little vi'let's juice has played
Its havoc with the eyes that were asleep . . .
Now I will turn away from gloom and shade!
And at some eager glance my heart may leap.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

ASPERITIES

By Amalia Guglielminetti. 1889—

Harsh am I as the winds of March that ride
triumphantly, and bring the cruel frost,
but loosen snow upon the mountain side.

The withered stems into new life are tossed,
uncovered are the violets in the grass,
the clouds that wander through the sky are lost.

Severe, my laugh to bitterness may pass;
to bite more than caress may please my taste,
to act as those who stores of pride amass.

For peace March winds and I are not in haste;
to lash the sleepy spirit is my aim,
that to a lively wrath it might be braced
till to my finger tips the tingling came.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

FROM "THE THIRD ROME"

By Giulio Ventura. 1898—

O thou ordained to rule with outstretched arms,
That first didst give the world roads, tongues, and
streams

High on the arches lying, as, (it seems)
'Thy empire with the weight of its great form;

For eagles, for the shining swords of old
Black mitres' crests, crosses and censers' fire
The substitute thou mad'st, and didst aspire
And vic'tries won o'er savage hosts untold.

But now 'tis vain to weave again the plan
That muffled up the middle age in sloth;
'Twould need the army famed in its black cloth
For weaving treasons in the Vatican.

In vain to stir up wrath it is not slack,
Through which all Europe groans, ferments and
fails,

And in the liberty and future hails
A foe on which it wills to turn its back.

Trans. by Florence Trail.

FROM THE ITALIAN EPIGRAMME

The past is not,—the hues in which 'tis drest
Fond memory supplies;

The future is not,—hope-born in the breast
Its fancied joys arise;

The present is not,—like the lightning's gleam
Its brief illusions seem;

This is the life allotted unto man,
A memory,—a hope,—a fleeting moment's span.

C.

SATIRES

By the Celebrated Dialect Poet, Trilussa

(C. A. Salustri.—Living)

I

THE PIG

An old pig to his friends the cows once said:
—“I am consumed with a desire so great
‘To end this swinish life and change my state.
‘I want to be all in a frock arrayed,
‘Wear shoes sold with high profit at low cost,
‘A flow’r, a glass in one eye to adjust,
‘And to the city I would sally forth,
‘Where people are more polished and sedate
‘And know society e’en from their birth.”—
Twas one to speak and act; that very day
He with his cousin Countess took his Tea,
And with the finest ladies played his part;
Got off his phrase in French with right good glee,
Sang, danced, played and made love with art.
But scarcely more than three days did he spend
Ere to the country he forthwith did flee;
“What”? said the cows, “Why this way do you
wend?
‘Did then society not really make you gay”?
“No,” said the pig, “with fools I found me placed,
I was all right, but could not gladly stay
Among a folk too swinish for my taste.”

II

THE HEART OF A TIGER

A tiger once within a handsome park
Among the public saw a lady fair
Who looked at him so much, he made remark
Unto the lion next him: "Should I meet
With her in desert wild, with hunger gnawed,
'T'd fast, because she is too fair to eat!
'Instead of that, how very nice,
'T'd creep up to her in a trice
'Just as her doggie when he gets the air
'In daily walkings in his lady's care."

Meanwhile the thoughts that filled the lady's mind
Were of a very, very diff'rent kind,
That she might gain a priceless rug;
So to her husband, chatting near, she 'pined:
"In looking at it I'm consumed within;
'What hair! what colors! how it feasts the eye!
'How madly do I long to have its skin!

Trans. by Florence Trail.

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